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FOREIGN NEWS & PERSPECTIVES OF THE OPERATIONAL ENVIRONMENT



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ON THE COVER:

Foreground: A 366th Training Squadron electrical systems apprentice course student at Sheppard Air Force Base, Texas, puts on a virtual reality headset Jan. 26, 2018, at Sheppard AFB.

Image Source: U.S. Air Force photo by Airman 1st Class Pedro Tenorio, <https://www.dvidshub.net/image/4126117/airmen-gauge-fear-heights-virtual-simulation>, Public Domain.

Background: Visualization of DTI data, depicting a detail of an axial slice of a human brain.

Image Source: Thomas Schultz [GFDL (<http://www.gnu.org/copyleft/fdl.html>), CC-BY-SA-3.0 (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/>) or CC BY-SA 2.5 (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/2.5/>)], <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:DTI-axial-ellipsoids.jpg>.

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Russia Adopts 57mm Caliber as Standard for Future Armored Vehicles

OE Watch Commentary: The Russian Federation has a long history of using 57mm caliber weapons. The Soviet manufactured ZSU-57-2 self-propelled anti-aircraft gun (SPAAG) was considered to be quite a success during the Vietnam War, the Arab-Israeli wars, and the Iran-Iraq War. Although the ZSU-57-2 lacked a radar system, making the targeting of jet aircraft extremely difficult, the system was excellent at engaging slower moving targets. The ZSU-57-2 and other SPAAGs that use smaller caliber shells, such as the ZSU-23-4 Shilka, the 2K22 Tunguska, and the Pantsir-S1, have an important secondary mission to use their rapid-fire guns to fire on ground targets when required. As discussed in the accompanying excerpted article from *Nezavisimoye Voyennoye Obozreniye*, Russia is currently developing its next generation of SPAAG technology, the 2S38 Derivatsiya-PVO SPAAG, which will reportedly be a 57mm gun system mounted on a BMP-3 chassis intended to primarily target helicopters and ground attack aircraft. The 57mm shell is considered to be ideal for destroying low-flying and (relatively) slow targets such as tactical UAVs, MLRS projectiles, cruise missiles, precision-guided munitions, and certain ground targets.

The accompanying excerpted article from *Izvestiya* discusses a recent Russian decision to make the 57mm autocannon a standard armament on future Russian infantry fighting vehicles (BMPs) and armored personnel carriers (BTRs). The Russian Federation has long made modularity a cornerstone of its military modernization. For instance, the Armata, Kurganets, Atom, BTR-82, BMD-4M chassis are all manufactured to accept BMP-3 turret specifications, so chassis and turrets of different manufacturers may be mixed and matched. Since these new turrets are all unmanned, some Russian theorists have posited that there will be no functional difference between infantry fighting vehicles and armored personnel carriers in the future. The Russian Federation could possibly adopt the AU-220M Baikal 57mm automated turret that reportedly can fire 120 shells per minute. As explained in the article, the Russians view larger caliber munitions, such as the 57mm, as essential for establishing dominance on the battlefield. Of particular note, there will likely be several different types of (interchangeable) shells produced for these systems to suit their particular missions. **End OE Watch Commentary (Bartles)**

“A light armored vehicle with a 57 millimeter gun will obtain an advantage over other armored vehicles of that same class.”



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BRM-3K armored reconnaissance vehicle with 57mm AU-220M Baikal turret system.

Source: Vitaly Kuzmin Blog, CC 4.0. (<https://www.vitalykuzmin.net/Copyright-policy>), <https://photos.smugmug.com/Military/ARMY-2016-Static-part1/i-fqrsPr/0/Secce52a/X2/Army2016-215-X2.jpg>.

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Continued: Russia Adopts 57mm Caliber as Standard for Future Armored Vehicles

Source: Irina Dronina, “Огненная «Деривация»: Российская армия получит новую зенитную самоходку (Fire ‘Derivation’: The Russian Army to Get New Self-Propelled Antiaircraft System,)” *Nezavisimoye Voyennoye Obozreniye*, 13 September 2018. http://nvo.ng.ru/nvo/2018-09-13/5_1013_arms.html

One of the armament and military equipment novelties presented at the recent Army-2018 forum was the 2S38 Derivatsiya-PVO self-propelled antiaircraft gun (SPAAG)...the unmanned combat module, in other words, the turret, in which there is no room set aside for crew members, but rather the 57-mm gun and 7.62-mm machine gun are controlled remotely from the hull where the three-man crew is resides...Stipulated for use...is the BMP-3 armored tracked chassis...The complex also includes a transporter-loader, a repair vehicle, and an ammunition set.

The ammunition set of the new antiaircraft artillery complex includes 148 rounds, while the developer provided for their automatic supply to the gun. The combat module’s design allows for circular horizontal aiming with the ability to adjust the vertical angle of the barrel from -5 to +75 degrees. The gun’s rate of fire is 120 rounds per minute...

In addition to standard ammunition, for the gun they can use fundamentally new rounds – multifunctional with remote detonator and guided artillery. The use of a programmable detonator is the main novelty here; prior to firing, the munition receives data from the fire control system, and the detonator will detonate the round at the assigned moment and the assigned distance from the gun.

The new self-propelled antiaircraft artillery piece will have an electro-optical control system with laser rangefinders and it can destroy air targets at distances of up to six kilometers and altitudes of up to 4.5 kilometers.

The Derivatsiya-PVO can be called a universal complex capable of operating under conditions of fire and radioelectronic countermeasures, as well as at any time of day and in any weather. It can be used when shooting at ground targets, including armor, as well as at enemy live forces. At the same time, the most effective ammunition is individually selected for each specific target.



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2S38.Derivatsiya-PVO.Self-Propelled Antiaircraft Gun.

Source: Vitaly Kuzmin Blog, CC 4.0. (<https://www.vitalykuzmin.net/Copyright-policy/>), <https://www.vitalykuzmin.net/Military/ARMY-2018-Static-part-3/i-hhBP2KZ/A>.

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Continued: Russia Adopts 57mm Caliber as Standard for Future Armored Vehicles

Source: “Убойные миллиметры: БМП и БТР вооружат мощными пушками-пулеметами (Destructive Millimeters: They Will Arm BMPs and BTRs with Powerful Autocannons),” *Izvestiya*, 8 November 2018. <https://iz.ru/795299/aleksei-ramm-bogdan-stepovoi/uboinye-millimetry-bmp-i-btr-vooruzhat-moshchnymi-pushkami-pulemetami>

The Ministry of Defense has approved the new armored vehicle development concept. The new maximum caliber – 57 millimeters – has been selected for all light armored vehicles (BMPs [infantry fighting vehicles], BTRs [armored personnel carriers], and armored motor vehicles). Those guns are strong based upon their versatility. They are capable of not only destroying tanks, but also of shooting down unmanned aerial vehicles. One can compare their rate of fire with a machinegun. For the time being, only Russia has been able to bring that weapon up to series production. A light armored vehicle with a 57 millimeter gun will obtain an advantage over other armored vehicles of that same class.

*A Ministry of Defense spokesman told *Izvestiya* that the new armored vehicle development concept was approved this year. Before making the decision, experimental-design work was conducted, which confirmed the feasibility of arming those vehicles with 57mm guns. Right now, as a rule, they install 30mm or 100mm guns-launchers on BMPs and BTRs. The local wars and armed conflicts of recent years have shown that the existing weapons are not always effective while combating high-speed or armored targets.*

The more powerful 57mm gun will permit a Russian light armored vehicle to not only easily deal with BMPs and BTRs but also enter into a skirmish with any existing probable enemy tanks, if necessary. It will be able to use it to damage sights, thermal-imaging devices, and other external equipment or to attack the side of such a well-defended tank as an Abrams.

Not hostile tanks, BTRs, or BMPs, but lightly-armored jeeps or unmanned aerial vehicles are increasingly becoming the main target on the battlefield for armored transport vehicle crews. Those targets need to be destroyed at maximum range, having used a minimal amount of ammunition. It is impossible to permit light infantry, which is traveling in “21st century machinegun carts”, to be the first to employ antitank guided missiles or drones – to transmit reconnaissance information to their command post...

*The new guns will increase the Ground Troops’ firepower, Military Expert Sergey Suvorov thinks. “He who more rapidly accomplishes his fire mission, will win in a contemporary war”, he told *Izvestiya*. “The 57mm seriously improves that indicator through its greater accuracy, lethality, and high armor-piercing capability than the existing 30mm guns”. This should ensure the superiority of domestic equipment over the latest BMPs and BTRs of the armies of the world’s leading countries for years. So, for example, the German Puma heavy BMP, which arrived in the Bundeswehr inventory in 2015, has just a 30mm gun in its weaponry.*



ZSU-57-2 Soviet self propelled anti-aircraft gun.

Source: User:VargaA, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:ZSU-57-2_Hun_2010_02.jpg, CC BY-SA 4.0 (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/>), from Wikimedia Commons.



Crimean Army Corps Conducts Amphibious Landing and Defense Exercise

OE Watch Commentary: The Russian 126th Coastal Defense Brigade and the 810th Naval Infantry Brigade are part of the 22nd Army Corps, which is the ground forces command of the Black Sea Fleet. As the accompanying excerpted article from *Krasnaya Zvezda* reports, these units recently conducted a force-on-force exercise in the Opuk training area in the southeast of the Crimean Peninsula.

The exercise was a “ramps-on-beach” exercise where the naval infantry’s tanks, artillery and personnel carriers stayed dry. The “over-the horizon” amphibious capability is lacking until the naval infantry receive more of the BMP-3F infantry fighting vehicles, which are especially designed for operations at sea. They have improved seaworthiness and buoyancy and can fire accurately at Beaufort Sea force 2 and function up to force 3. Reportedly, they can endure sustained amphibious operations for up to seven hours.

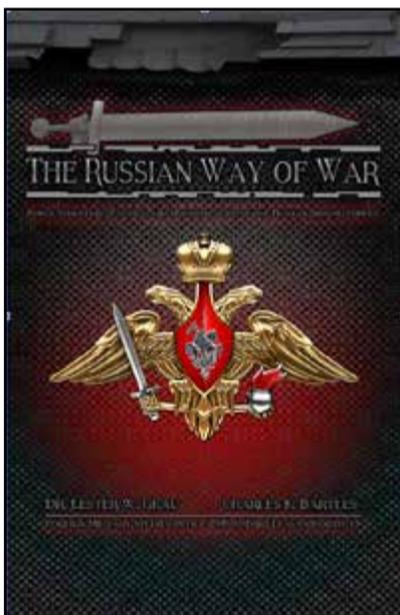
Of particular interest was the Russian use of tanks in the reconnaissance-strike system. The reconnaissance-strike system is a Russian tactical innovation to combine reconnaissance, command and control and artillery together in order to identify and destroy targets accurately in near-real time. Soviet/Russian tanks have long had a “support by indirect fire” role and the inclusion of accurate high-angle tank fire in the reconnaissance-strike system has been used in Syria. It has now spread to the training grounds of the Crimea and unmanned aerial vehicles provided much of the targeting data. **End OE Watch Commentary (Grau)**

“In order to conduct aerial reconnaissance and generate targeting data, subunits used UAVs, including Takhions and Orlans. During the seaborne landing, Eleron UAVs flew from one of the large landing ships.”



BMP-3 infantry fighting vehicle.

Source: Vitaly Kuzmin Blog, <https://www.vitalykuzmin.net/Military/ARMY-2017-Demonstration-p1/i-3SKF64Q>, CC 4.0.



THE RUSSIAN WAY OF WAR by LESTER W. GRAU and CHARLES K. BARTLES

At any given time, assessments of the Russian Armed Forces vary between the idea of an incompetent and corrupt conscript army manning decrepit Soviet equipment and relying solely on brute force, to the idea of an elite military filled with Special Operations Forces (SOF) who were the “polite people” or “little green men” seen on the streets in Crimea. This book will attempt to split the difference between these radically different ideas by shedding some light on what the Russian Ground Forces consist of, how they are structured, how they fight, and how they are modernizing.

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Continued: Crimean Army Corps Conducts Amphibious Landing and Defense Exercise

Source: Pavel Zavolokin, “В бой идут «чёрные береты» (“Black Berets” go into battle),” *Krasnaya Zvezda*, 17 October 2018. <http://redstar.ru/plechom-k-plechu-drug-protiv-druga/>

The 12-day exercise was divided into four main phases with two to six events in each of them. One of the most dynamic and intensive events involved landing naval infantry subunits from large amphibious landing ships on an unfortified coastline.

In order to secure a beachhead before the large amphibious landing ships approached the shore, “black berets” of the naval infantry, with the support of attack helicopters, conducted a tactical air assault from Mi-8AMTSh helicopters and also landed attack and engineer-sapper groups from high-speed motor boats. Fighting successfully to secure a beachhead and clearing passages through minefields, the lead naval infantry subunits ensured that the ships were able to approach the shoreline and disembark the brigade’s main forces from the landing ships’ twin decks directly onto dry land.

Building on their success, the naval infantry cleared the beachhead with a rapid attack and moved inland from the coast. Driving the notional enemy back from his forward positions, the advancing naval infantry destroyed enemy reserves and established a defensive line and begin digging in. During the live-fire phase, individual small arms, BTR-82A ordnance, grenade-launcher teams, and 2S9 self-propelled howitzer Nona-S crews engaged targets. Lieutenant-Colonel Roman Verikzhinkov, deputy chief of the Black Sea Fleet Army Corps Operations Section, stated that this is a force-on-force exercise. While the naval infantry is seeking to capture a section of coastline following successful sea and air landings, the coastal defense brigade soldiers are defending that coast against an enemy invasion.

The successful side will be the one that employs tactics that the “adversary” least expects, makes rational use of available forces and resources, and responds correctly and promptly to unexpected exercise events. The Black Sea Fleet Army Corps headquarters assesses its subunit commanders’ decisions daily, while a modeling group is using mathematical calculations to assess the effectiveness of the opposing sides’ actions.

The exercise included experiences from modern-day combat in Syria. Extensive use was made of [artillery] reconnaissance-fire systems, tank reconnaissance-fire systems, mobile electronic warfare groups, fortifications incorporating ancient “Syrian ramparts,” and vertical envelopment and outflanking notional enemy’s forces. In order to create a situation that was as close as possible to actual conditions and effectively fulfill prescribed missions, subunits from a separate reconnaissance brigade and a CBR reconnaissance regiment, command and control and communications battalions, and artillery regiment subunits were mobilized for the exercise.

Lieutenant-Colonel Verikzhinkov stated “At least six [artillery] reconnaissance-fire complexes, including two tank reconnaissance fire complexes have been in operation. The use of the latter is more than justified -- they are armored systems with good firepower that are hard to destroy. Further, this makes it possible to rehearse effectively those issues relating to tank fire over large distances from concealed positions.”

In order to conduct aerial reconnaissance and generate targeting data, subunits used UAVs, including Takhions and Orlans. During the seaborne landing, Eleron UAVs flew from one of the large landing ships. The drones relayed reconnaissance information, even when the command points were packed up and moving with the subunits. While the Coastal Defense brigade’s subunits were on the move their drones remained in the air, collecting information in automatic mode...

The drones were confronted by electronic warfare subunits, which were attempting to disrupt or intercept C&C channels on the Takhions hovering over the training ground. The electronic warfare experts had to operate with precision in order to avoid “wrecking” valuable equipment on the ground. Meanwhile they were striving to suppress the notional enemy’s communications channels as completely as possible. As the experience of operations in Syria suggests, a suppressed enemy communications network provides a tangible contribution to the success of an entire operation.

Communications personnel at Opuk also came under attack -- this time from saboteurs. As the actions of the sabotage and reconnaissance groups demonstrated, communications equipment sites are vulnerable, threatening subunits with the loss of several communications channels at once. New mobile command and control and communications devices, enabling a commander to control a subunit on the move without using command-staff vehicles or deploying communications sites, are currently being trialed in subunits. Such systems make it possible to safeguard data-transmission channels at the tactical level, and in the very near future it is expected that this system will be further developed at a higher level of command and control.

The force-on-force exercise resulted in the fulfillment of tasks to repulse actions by an “enemy” who had landed on the coast and to defend the coastline. Which of the brigades will prove victorious in the end will be shown by an upcoming detailed analysis of operations during each stages of the maneuvers. As yet it can only be said that all the planned tasks for the training event were achieved and the subunit commanders and personnel acquired essential training in conducting modern combat.



Russia Conducts Brigade/Division Force-On-Force Exercises

OE Watch Commentary: Although there was much ballyhoo over Russia's Vostok-2018 maneuvers in September, little has been mentioned in the Russian mass media about large-scale force-on-force exercises that were reportedly conducted in the Southern Military District in October. According to the accompanying press releases from the Russian Ministry of Defense, a number of units participated, including elements from the 8th, 49th, and 58th Combined Arms Armies, the 22nd Army Corps, the Caspian Flotilla, the Black Sea Fleet, the 4th Air Force and Air Defense Army, military units directly subordinate to the Southern Military District, and certain spetsnaz units.

Although in terms of numbers of personnel and scope of operations the Vostok-2018 maneuvers were far larger, the October exercise featured large-scale force-on-force maneuvers. Apparently, the exercise is the first of its kind in recent memory involving divisions or brigades conducting exercises against one other. As Colonel-General Aleksandr Dvornikov, the Commander of the Southern Military District states: "For the first time in exercises of this level, the opposed forces principle was implemented, in which troops in two operational directions conducted combat operations against each other... Prior to the command staff exercise the troops of the military district conducted just company and battalion tactical exercises." The implication of the October exercise is that the Russians believe that large-scale warfare is now more a possibility than previously thought and that such warfare will not be conducted by large numbers of independent battalion tactical groups, but instead by brigades and divisions/regiments. Interestingly, the Russians have chosen to pit units against one another, instead of creating an opposing force (OPFOR) to replicate enemy capabilities. Apparently, the use of a notional OPFOR was either deemed not feasible or unnecessary for this event. **End OE Watch Commentary (Bartles)**



Commander of the Southern Military District Colonel-General Dvornikov/Alexander Vladimirovich

Source: Mil.ru [CC BY 4.0] (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>); [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Aleksandr_Dvornikov_\(2016\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Aleksandr_Dvornikov_(2016).jpg)



Military parade on the maneuvers "Vostok-2018" (Tsugol training ground, Trans-Baikal Territory).

Source: Russian Defense Ministry, <http://мультимедиа.минобороны.рф/multimedia/photo/gallery.htm?id=60539@cmsPhotoGallery>, CC 4.0.

(continued)



Continued: Russia Conducts Brigade/Division Force-On-Force Exercises

Source: “АЧетыре дивизионных и бригадных тактических учения пройдут в рамках КШУ сгруппировками войск ЮВО (Four Divisional and Brigade Tactical Exercises to Take Place as Part of Command-Staff Exercise with Groups of Southern Military District Troops),” *Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation*, 18 September 2018. https://function.mil.ru/news_page/country/more.htm?id=12195952@egNews

It is planned to conduct four divisional and brigade tactical exercises this fall as part of a major command-staff exercise with groups of troops from the Southern Military District. Colonel General Aleksandr Dvornikov, commander of the Southern Military District troops, talked about the concluding events in the summer training period.

“In the first 10 days of October naval infantry formations from the 22nd Army Corps of the Black Sea Fleet will conduct tactical exercises in Crimea at the Opuk combined-arms range,” Col. Gen. A. Dvornikov said.

“From 10 through 21 October the 150th Motorized Rifle Division and the 20th Motorized Rifle Brigade of the Southern Military District’s 8th Combined-Arms Army will take part in two-sided tactical exercises at the Prudboy combined-arms range in Volgograd Oblast, and two-sided exercises by the 42nd Motorized Rifle Division and the 136th Motorized Rifle Brigade of the Southern Military District’s 58th Combined-Arms Army are planned at four ranges in North Ossetia and Dagestan,” the commander added on the topic of the bilateral exercises...

A fourth set of tactical exercises will be one-sided and will involve military units from the Southern Military District Russian military base in Armenia at the Alagyaz and Kamkhud mountain ranges.

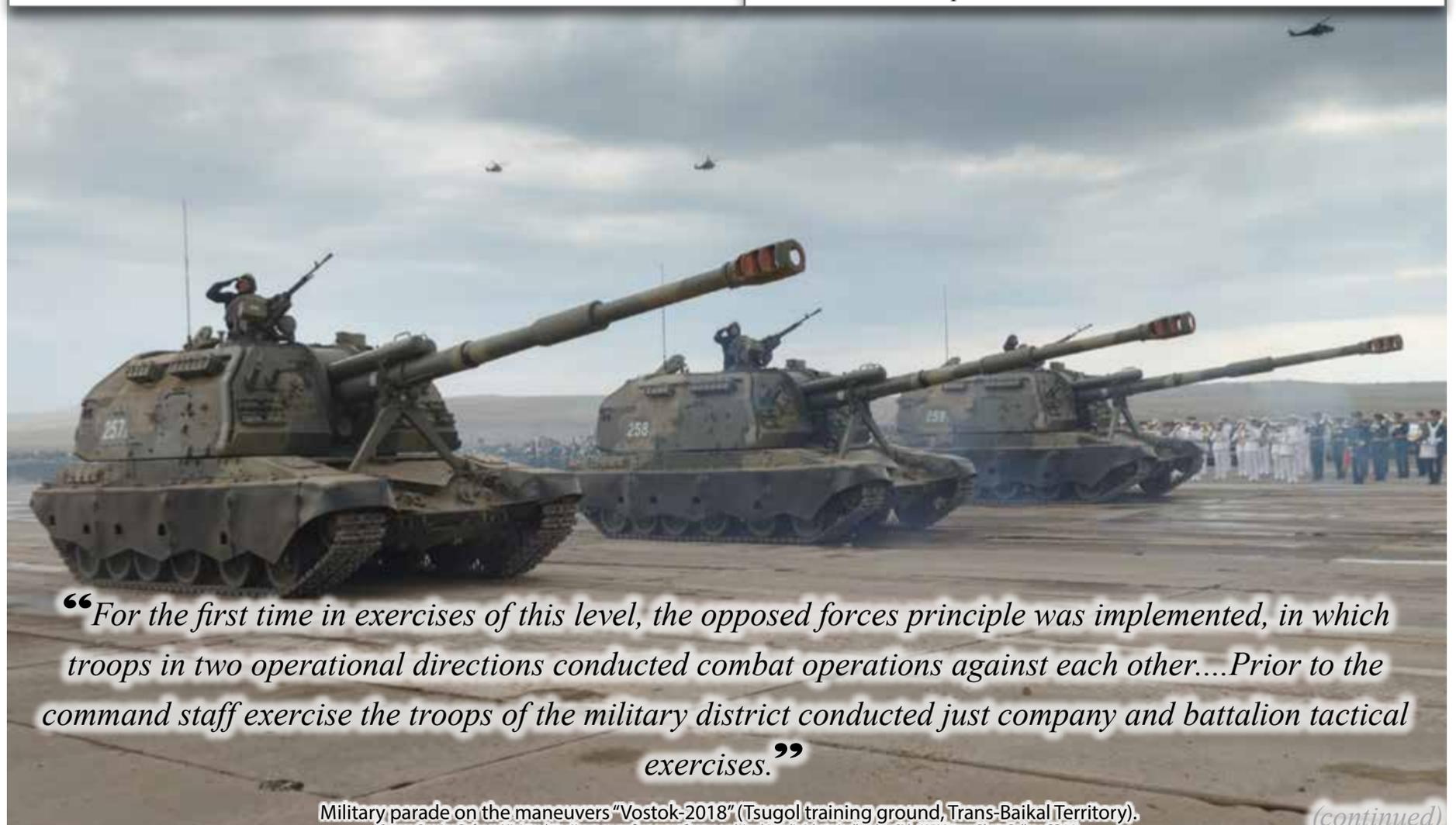
Source: “Соединения армии Южного военного округа (ЮВО), дислоцированные в Волгоградской и Ростовской областях принимают участие в двухстороннем командно-штабном учении (КШУ) на полигоне Прудбой под Волгоградом (Exercise with Southern Military District Formations Begins in the Volgograd Oblast),” *Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation*, 1 October 2018. <https://tvzvezda.ru/news/forces/content/201810011602-mil-ru-j6tgf.html>

Formations [Соединения] of an army of the Southern Military District based in the Volgograd and Rostovs oblasts are participating in an opposed forces command-staff exercise [командно-штабном учении] at the Prudboy training range near Volgograd.

Over the course of five days the commanders and the staffs of the formations will practice a set of tasks to improve practical skills in the uninterrupted command and control of operations of subordinate forces during a notional battle and in the organization and support of interactions between subunits while repelling notional enemy attacks...

The exercise of formations of the 8th Combined Arms Army of the Southern Military District will follow a single scenario as the final exercise of record [итогового учения] of the troops of the Southern Military District. It has begun simultaneously in seven regions of southern Russia under the leadership of Colonel-General Aleksandr Dvornikov, the commander of troops of the district.

...Up to 7,000 servicemen will participate in various stages of the gaming of tactical episodes and more than 2,500 pieces of military equipment will be involved, including approximately 20 aircraft and more than 60 helicopters.



“For the first time in exercises of this level, the opposed forces principle was implemented, in which troops in two operational directions conducted combat operations against each other....Prior to the command staff exercise the troops of the military district conducted just company and battalion tactical exercises.”

Military parade on the maneuvers “Vostok-2018” (Tsugol training ground, Trans-Baikal Territory).
Source: Russian Defense Ministry, <http://мультимедиа.минобороны.рф/multimedia/photo/gallery.htm?id=60539@cmsPhotoGallery>, CC 4.0.

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Continued: Russia Conducts Brigade/Division Force-On-Force Exercises

Source: “Командующий войсками ЮВО объявил о завершении масштабного КШУ (Commander of Troops of Southern Military District Announces Completion of Large-Scale Command-Staff Exercise),” *Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation*, 8 October 2018. https://function.mil.ru/news_page/country/more.htm?id=12198892@egNews

Colonel-General Aleksandr Dvornikov, Commander of Troops of the Southern Military District, has announced the completion of a command-staff exercise involving troop groupings in the Caspian and Vladikavkaz Operational Directions.

For the first time in exercises of this level the opposed forces principle [принцип двусторонности] was implemented, in which troop groupings in two operational directions [двух операционных направлениях] conducted combat operations against each other. A leadership staff, in which a referee unit of more than 200 officers operated, was established to monitor and analyze the decisions of the commanders of the major commands and below. On-site evaluations were provided of the actions of all participants of the activity, including the execution by subunits of dozens of combat orders.

The leadership of the exercise paid special attention to evaluating the abilities of the commanders of all levels to make unconventional decisions in the combat training environment and to operate using the combat experience of modern armed conflicts...

During the tactical operations events, modern methods of combating cruise missiles as members of ship and aviation groups were used with support provided by shore signals intelligence assets and air defense assets. The destruction of enemy strike UAVs, the repelling of attacks by sabotage and reconnaissance groups, fire support as components of reconnaissance-strike and reconnaissance-fire loops, and other scenarios were practiced. Ships of the Caspian Flotilla performed live firings with the Kalibr missile system.

Summarizing the exercise, Colonel-General Aleksandr Dvornikov, Southern Military District Commander of Troops, noted that this method of conducting exercises both at the operational level, as well as at the command level, was advanced.

Prior to the command staff exercise the troops of the military district conducted just company and battalion tactical exercises. All of these were of the opposed forces type. During the exercises new methods were tested and modern principles of managing subunits in combat were used.

“The armies of the district are facing very large, formation-level tactical exercises, in which the opposed forces techniques that have been developed must continue,” Colonel-General Aleksandr Dvornikov indicated.



Performing engineering tasks in preparation for the Vostok-2018 maneuvers.
Source: Russian Defense Ministry, <http://мультимедиа.минобороны.рф/multimedia/photo/gallery.htm?id=60538@cmsPhotoGallery>, CC 4.0.



Caspian Sea Flotilla Conducts Amphibious Landing Exercise

OE Watch Commentary: The Russian Caspian Sea Flotilla has two naval infantry battalions—the 414th in Kaspiysk, Dagestan and the 727th in Astrakhan, Astrakhan Oblast. This year, it was the 727th's turn to conduct an exercise. The Caspian Sea Flotilla's amphibious landing ships carry 3-4 vehicles, or up to 100 personnel each. There are no large landing ships in the flotilla, but their smaller landing ships are all comparatively new, since they have been built since the collapse of the Soviet Union. The naval infantry is mounted on BTR-82As, which are reliable, modernized, up-engined wheeled armored personnel carriers with an amphibious capability. The accompanying excerpted article from *Krasnaya Zvezda* (dated 17 October) states that the sea state was at least Beaufort Scale 2, which made the going choppy. Beaufort Scale 2 is a light breeze of 4-7 mph, which produces 1-2 foot waves. Apparently, the BTR-82A is amphibious, but not aggressively amphibious. The landing ships have the option of running the craft on shore and having the vehicles drive off onto dry land or approaching the shore line and letting the vehicles drive off into the water and swim to shore. Running the craft on shore lengthens the time that a vessel could come under fire in an opposed landing, so having the vehicles drive off into the water and swim is preferred when opposed. The BTR-80 series of vehicles were designed for river crossings, not open sea. The naval infantry has long been lobbying for another infantry carrier which is larger and more seaworthy. A new Bumerang-chassis BTR could fill that need.

“Prior to loading, each BTR-82 [armored personnel carrier] underwent a dunking, where the fighting vehicle enters the water and floats while its hull is checked for water-tightness. Only after passing this test for dryness and unsinkability will the APC ascend onto the craft's ramp.”

This landing did not include extended sustainment training. In previous Caspian Sea exercises, they have run pipelines from offshore tankers onto the beachhead and pumped over 400 tons of fuel (see: “Russian Pipeline Troops: Sustaining the Fight Across the Land and From the Sea”, *OE Watch*, October 2018). The Caspian Sea naval infantry contingent is being expanded from two battalions into the 177th Naval Infantry Regiment, as the other excerpted article from *Krasnaya Zvezda* notes. Whether it will be a two-battalion or three-battalion regiment remains to be seen; however, it is a significant expansion of capabilities. **End OE Watch Commentary (Grau)**

Source: Shamil Khayrullin, “Атака с моря на гребне волны (Attack from the Sea on the Crest of a Wave),” *Krasnaya Zvezda*, 17 October 2018. <http://redstar.ru/ataka-s-morya-na-grebne-volny/>

Vehicle loading ... was conducted at dusk under blackout conditions from the shore of a bay that was sheltered from the wind and the waves. Prior to loading, each BTR-82 [armored personnel carrier] underwent a dunking, where the fighting vehicle enters the water and floats while its hull is checked for water-tightness. Only after passing this test for dryness and unsinkability will the APC ascend onto the craft's ramp...

The amphibious landing ship detachment landing craft with all personnel and equipment aboard sheltered in the bay for the night. The next morning, the amphibious landing craft division commander received the radio message that the missile ship Dagestan had inflicted a missile strike with a Kalibr precision missile on the “enemy” command post and communications on the Caspian coast.... The command for the amphibious landing ship detachment to sail followed.

The fact that the sea was choppy -- at least Beaufort Force two -- became clear when the landing craft left the bay. However, the choppy sea did not affect the landing force personnel's upbeat fighting spirit.... The landing ship detachment operated stealthily to mislead the “enemy” as to its intentions. They conducted a simulated landing at a different part of the coast. At that place, Serna-class amphibious landing craft, under the cover of a dense smoke screen laid by a Spetsnaz vessel, simulated an approach toward the coast.

The real landing of the wheeled vehicles was conducted further to the south, on a three-kilometer stretch where Spetsnaz divers had cleared the landing approach of “mines” and “explosive devices”. A hydrographic service detachment set up alignment markers and a sapper subunit landed and cleared passages through the minefield. In addition, to provide fire support for the landing, the forward air controllers called in attack helicopters and Su-25 attack aircraft.

The landing of the battalion's main forces consisted of several tactical groups, each of which functioned independently within its own zone, thereby confusing the “enemy” (its role was played by a Black Sea Fleet naval infantry company) as to the landing force's main strike zone. This frustrated the defensive force's ability to execute effective fires and a counter attack rapidly.

Finally, the amphibious landing craft ramps were lowered, the first fighting vehicles drove into the water where steep Caspian waves snatched them up and propelled them to the shore

On 8 October, in Kaspiysk, the Southern Military District command summed up the results of the large-scale command and staff exercise in the Caspian area. Particular attention focused on assessing the ability of commanders at all levels to make nonstandard decisions in a combat-training situation and to act so as to apply the combat experience of modern armed conflicts. The Caspian Flotilla's operations fully meet these requirements.... The command and staff exercise's command personnel demonstrated high-quality operational and tactical skills and in general, coped with the missions set for the period of the command and staff exercise. However, during their execution, the flotilla headquarters had not avoided certain errors. For example, a planning-error occurred while assessing the sea's turbulence at the time of the landing, and this violated safety standards when the personnel were moving to shore in wheeled vehicles.

(continued)



Continued: Caspian Sea Flotilla Conducts Amphibious Landing Exercise

Source: Leonid Khayremdinov, “В Каспийске будет современная военно-морская база (Kaspiysk will have a modern naval base),” *Krasnaya Zvezda*, 17 August 2018. <http://redstar.ru/v-kaspijske-budet-sovremennaya-voenno-morskaya-baza/>

General of the Army Sergey Shoygu, Russian Federation Minister of Defense, inspected the construction of a new base for the Caspian Flotilla in Dagestan. Last year, the supreme commander made a strategic decision on the relocation of the Caspian Flotilla Headquarters from Astrakhan’ to a more southern region – Dagestan. There are two factors behind this decision – geophysical and strategic. Astrakhan’, situated in the Volga delta, is hydrologically less suitable for ships than Kaspiysk, which is located on the open sea. And the distance from there to the main operational areas is significantly less– the Caspian future naval base is practically on the equator of the planet’s largest enclosed lake.

[In August] in Kazakhstan’s Aktau, which, incidentally, is situated practically opposite Russia’s Kaspiysk, the leaders of the Caspian states (Azerbaijan, Iran, Kazakhstan, Russia, and Tajikistan) signed the Convention on the Legal Status of the Caspian Sea. It bars the deployment in the region of any military contingents and bases from third countries. The Russian Navy’s Caspian Flotilla is the guarantor of the observance of this important part of the document. General of the Army Sergey Shoygu inspected the major construction in Kaspiysk... It includes building anchorages and berths for the ships; erection of piers and servicing centers; dredging; and shore infrastructure....

The housing and barracks are almost finished, a cultural and leisure center is being erected, a military hospital has begun operation. Moorages and hydraulic structures, a training area and warehouses are under construction in the adjacent city of Makhachkala to accommodate the ships, patrol boats, and support vessels.

Minister Shoygu stated “Surveying for the development of the Kaspiyskya Bight is being performed and facilities in the port of Makhachkala are currently being built as part of the improvement of the system of basing of the flotilla. Major renovation of the buildings and structures for accommodating the 177th Naval Infantry Regiment, which is being organized this year, is being completed. Training facilities for the detachment which combats underwater-saboteurs are being provided with amenities. A modern naval base with engineering, navigation-hydrographic, and logistic support is being built in Kaspiysk.”



Amphibious assault supports deployment of CSS base on sea shore, Caspian Flotilla (09/2017).
Source: Russian Defense Ministry, <http://eng.mil.ru/en/multimedia/photo/gallery.htm?id=60386@cmsPhotoGallery>, CC 4.0.



Young Army for All Schools

OE Watch Commentary: During the Soviet period, the young communist league (Komsomol), served as the chief conduit for training school-age children in party principles. Although the communist teachings have been largely discredited, as the first accompanying excerpt from the official Russian news source *TASS* points out, this past month, Komsomol celebrated its 100th anniversary with a concert at the Kremlin Palace. As the article explains, prior to the collapse of the USSR, “Komsomol was one of the most popular organizations in the history of the international youth movement, which was an important component of the Soviet political system and a starting point in choosing a profession and a path of creative realization for about 200 million young people.”

Over the past several years, Kremlin officials have been searching for a new ideology to both replace the Komsomol ideology and to inspire and guide Russian youth while attending school. The second excerpt, also from *TASS*, suggests that this new ideology for Russian young people will be built upon the Yunarmiya (Young Army) movement, which emphasizes patriotism and military defense. The article quotes Deputy Defense Minister Andrei Kartapolov (head of the Main Military Political Directorate of the Armed Forces), who claims that “the Yunarmiya movement in 2019 should appear in all schools of the country.” According to Kartapolov, what began as a relatively small patriotic organization for youth in April 2016, now “exceeds 270 thousand adolescents.” Kartapolov asserts that “the formation of the Yunarmiya movement, which is by far the most widespread military-patriotic movement in the country, has been completed.” (For additional background on this topic, see: “Russia’s New ‘Young Army’ Movement,” *OE Watch*, July 2016). The article goes on to quote the Chief of the Yunarmiya movement, who announced that in 2019, the organization will also branch out into “the enterprises of the Russian defense industry.” While not exactly specified, the objective of this new Yunarmiya project will provide vocational training for those students interested in working “with enterprises of the Russian military-industrial complex.”

While many today in Russia still retain a nostalgia for the ideals of Komsomol, the ideological void which developed after the collapse of the USSR has slowly, but surely, filled with renewed calls for patriotism and national defense. As the modern Russian state becomes ever more militarized, it is not surprising that the Yunarmiya movement has now become widespread within the country’s school system. **End OE Watch Commentary (Finch)**

“Next year, the Yunarmiya movement should be represented in all schools of the country.”



Source: “Столетие ленинского комсомола отметили концертом в Кремлевском дворце (Centenary of Leninist Komsomol was celebrated with a concert in the Kremlin Palace),” *TASS*, 27 October 2018. <https://tass.ru/kultura/5728526>

The centenary of the founding of the All-Union Leninist Communist Youth Union (VLKSM-Komsomol) was celebrated with a concert at the State Kremlin Palace....

...The Komsomol is one of the most popular organizations in the history of the international youth movement, which was an important component of the Soviet political system and a starting point in choosing a profession and a path of creative realization for about 200 million young people.

Source: “Минобороны: отряды “Юнармии” появятся во всех школах страны в 2019 году (Defense Ministry: detachments of “Yunarmiya” to appear in all schools in 2019),” *TASS*, 2 November 2018. <https://tass.ru/obschestvo/5752050>

The Yunarmiya movement in 2019 should appear in all schools of the country, said Russia’s Deputy Defense Minister, head of the Main Military Political Directorate of the Armed Forces, Andrei Kartapolov.

“Next year, the Yunarmiya movement should be represented in all schools of the country. For this to happen, multi-year events should be held at the highest level with maximum coverage of young people, including with the participation of youth military-patriotic associations and clubs in the community” Kartapolov said at the meeting of the headquarters of Yunarmiya. He also noted that in the two years since the foundation of the movement, enrollment has now exceeded 270 thousand adolescents.

“The formation of the Yunarmiya movement, which is by far the most widespread military-patriotic movement in the country, has been completed. Regional headquarters are gaining experience,” added Kartapolov.

In turn, the chief of the headquarters of the military-patriotic movement Roman Romanenko, noted that the Yunarmiya centers in 2019 will appear at the enterprises of the Russian defense industry.” In 2019, we are launching a new project Yunarmiya in the profession. The project is being implemented in partnership with enterprises of the Russian military-industrial complex. The goal is to create multi-agency centers on the basis of defense enterprises,” said Romanenko....

...The All-Russian Children and Youth Military-Patriotic Social Movement “Yunarmiya” was created on the initiative of the Ministry of Defense in 2016. Members of the movement are Russians aged 8 to 18 years. The headquarters of the organization work in all Russian regions.



Russian Railroad Troop Developments

OE Watch Commentary: Russia's Railroad Troops is a uniformed branch of the Material-Technical Support Troops with approximately 28,500 personnel. Although their structure and command relationships have often been changed, their general core purpose has not, which is providing technical support, rebuilding, and securing railways (including mine clearance); constructing new railways for military and (occasionally) civilian use; and managing a few armored trains in Russia's Southern Military District. The Railroad Troops are organized into 4 corps (aligned to each military district) and 10 separate brigades (with each brigade having 2-5 battalions). The Russian Federation has a highly developed network of 17 railway lines, with a total length of more than 86,000 kilometers of track. These tracks are primarily managed and serviced by the state-owned Russian Railways Company (RZhD), but can be serviced by the Railroad Troops if necessary. After the annexation of Crimea, the Russian Railroad Troops reportedly laid 177km of the 214km Zhuravka-Millerovo rail line that was built to bypass Ukraine. In addition to domestic duties, there has been mention in the Russian mass media of deployment of Russian Railroad Troops to Syria in order to rebuild the rail infrastructure.

The accompanying excerpted article from *Krasnaya Zvezda* features an interview with Lieutenant General Oleg Kosenkov, Chief of Railway Troops. General Kosenkov discusses how the Railroad Troops have not only supported military operations, but have also been key in supporting natural disaster relief efforts. In line with this theme, the accompanying excerpted article from *Izvestiya* discusses Russian plans to equip the Railroad Troops with more modern equipment to better support these efforts. Although the accompanying excerpted article from *Vedomosti* does not mention the Railroad Troops, the transfer of the Arctic Bovanenkovo-Sabetta rail line to federal control will likely mean that the Railroad Troops (which are accustomed to working in austere conditions) will be deployed to support this effort, thereby lowering construction costs. In sum, the Railroad Troops are not only seen as a military necessity, but also as an important tool during a humanitarian crisis and (sometimes) an economic enabler.

End OE Watch Commentary (Bartles)



Lieutenant General Oleg Kosenkov,
Chief of Railroad Troops.

Source: Mil.ru [CC BY 4.0 (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>)], https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Oleg_Kosenkov.jpg.



Competition for the best specialist and the calculation of railway troops in the Eastern Military District (2016).

Source: Mil.ru [CC BY 4.0 (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>)], <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Competition2016-02.jpg>.

(continued)



Continued: Russian Railroad Troop Developments

“The latest models of special equipment – all terrain vehicles, swamp buggies, amphibious vehicles, self-propelled pontoons, and others – are arriving in the railroad formations right now.”

Source: Aleksandr Tikhonov, “Переброска войск будет обеспечена (Troop Deployments Will Be Assured),” *Krasnaya Zvezda*, 24 October 2018. <http://redstar.ru/perebroska-vojsk-budet-obespechena>

[Kosenkov] ...our core purpose is technical support and reconstruction of railways. In the event of railway infrastructure being destroyed, for example the 4-km major rail bridge (and rail bridges are classed as minor, intermediate, and major) across the Yenisey river outside Krasnoyarsk, the most important thing is to rebuild it as quickly as possible so that traffic can resume. The extent of the damage will inform the decision on whether to rebuild the bridge along the old center line or make a near or more distant detour...

Rail transport remains the main method of moving supplies and personnel in our country. Military transport aviation cannot carry the same amount of men and materiel as rail can in the same compressed period of time. It can handle rapid-reaction missions but on the whole, our troop movements are by rail...So the mission assigned to us was to restore the rail bridge. Every structure for which we provide technical support has two or three preprepared rebuilding sites...

[Tikhonov] Oleg Ivanovich, with what kind of outcomes are the Railway Troops ending the 2018 training year?

[Kosenkov] Regarding what we call practical training work, the troops completed it by 1 September. Except for a task that was set in February by the Russian Federation Defense Minister, Army General Sergey Kuzhugetovich Shoygu, to build a road bridge across the Yenisey outside the town of Kyzyl to shorten the traveling distance and time for subunits of the 55th Separate Motorized Rifle Brigade when moving to a training ground. There was no proper bridge there beforehand -- only a ferry crossing. We were given until 29 September to build the bridge. That objective was achieved and the bridge's opening ceremony and entry into operation took place 12 October. In 2018 the Railway Troops repaired 60 km of approach tracks not at 47 Defense Ministry sites. These were various types of repair -- raising track, or reinforcing it...

Source: Roman Kretsul and Aleksey Ramm, “Военные железнодорожники получили приоритет: Функционал железнодорожных войск будет существенно расширен (Military Railroad Personnel Have Received the Priority: The Railroad Troops' Functionality Will Be Significantly Enhanced),” *Izvestiya*, 14 September 2018. <https://iz.ru/783651/roman-kretcul-aleksei-ramm/voennye-zheleznodorozhniky-poluchili-prioritet>

The Railroad Troops will be reinforced. The Ministry of Defense has made that decision. The realization of the concept of their expansion began this year, including the emphasis will be made on their participation in rescue work during emergency situations. New equipment is already arriving in the troops. During the course of the reforms of the end of the last decade, the status and role of the Railroad Troops were appreciably reduced...However, as a result, the Defense Department came to the conclusion on the need for these formations, which not only ensure the deployment of troops, but are also involved in the construction and repair of railroad tracks. The fact that the railroad troops proved themselves after the events of 2014 in Ukraine played a leading role in this...

*The Railroad Troops' functionality and technical capabilities will be significantly enhanced, a Ministry of Defense spokesman reported to *Izvestiya*. Not only the support of transport movements, but also rescue work during emergency situations and the elimination of catastrophes will be part of their missions. The latest models of special equipment – all terrain vehicles, swamp buggies, amphibious vehicles, self-propelled pontoons, and others – are arriving in the railroad formations right now. The troops should undergo complete reequipping by 2020...*

Source: Olga Adamchuk and Artur Toporkov, “«Газпром» и РЖД вместе могут построить самую северную железную дорогу России (Gazprom and Russian Railways Together May Construct Russia's Most Northerly Railroad),” *Vedomosti*, 29 October 2018. <https://www.vedomosti.ru/business/articles/2018/10/29/784911-zheleznuyu-dorogu>

A year ago President Vladimir Putin said that enterprises operating in the Arctic were already producing 10 percent of Russia's GDP. This may be why the government is thinking of relaunching one of the biggest transportation projects – Russia's most northerly railroad to the port of Sabetta. In order to construct this railroad (Bovanenkovo-Sabetta), it will be transferred to the federal level: The federal budget will safeguard the investors, an official and three participants in the negotiations said...

The railroad is needed to ensure the delivery of freight to places of extraction – according to the YaNAO Government's data, investment in opening up Yamal and the neighboring Gydan Peninsula will come to R7 trillion by 2035 – and also to move freight from the Northern Latitudinal Railroad, along which some 20 oil and gas fields are located, to the Northern Sea Route.

The railroad will cost R113-115 billion, someone else familiar with the talks' progress confirmed. Two talks participants promised that the new planning decisions will produce a saving: It will be a single-track railroad, without an embankment for a second track. The throughput capacity will be 8-10 million tons a year, the Governor's spokesman said. Gazprom's participation in the concession is logical: The company has already constructed the Obskaya-Bovanenkovo-Karskaya section employing technologies for permafrost...



Northern Fleet Army Corps Command and Control Element

OE Watch Commentary: Russian Army Corps are smaller than US Corps and are usually part of a combined command as part of a naval fleet. The Northern Fleet is Russia's largest and most powerful fleet with responsibilities for defending the Arctic and maintaining Russia's primary strategic nuclear submarine strike capability. The 14th Army Corps is part of the Northern Fleet and controls a ground forces coastal defense motorized rifle brigade, an Arctic motorized rifle brigade and a naval infantry brigade. This accompanying article, excerpted from a larger article on Russian Arctic ground forces, addresses the composition and training of the corps' command and control battalion. It is designed to deploy support elements to multiple Arctic deployments simultaneously and maintain constant communication with corps and fleet headquarters. The battalion must be able to communicate with naval, ground, air, air defense and coast guard elements. Considering the size of the Northern Fleet's area of operations, the difficulties of communications in the Arctic and the need to mesh with the different services, this battalion has a lot on its plate. **End OE Watch Commentary (Grau)**



Northern Fleet Army Corps recruits departing to the military ranges in the Murmansk Region.
Source: Russian Defense Ministry, http://eng.mil.ru/en/news_page/country/more.htm?id=12127838@egNews, CC 4.0.

“The Northern Fleet’s Army Corps has its own Separate Command and Control Battalion. It is the responsibility of the battalion...to deploy the command and control posts ... of the corps’ ground forces, to give them technical and rear support, to organize communications, to carry out reconnaissance, and to control artillery fire.”

Compendium of Central Asian Military and Security Activity

By Matthew Stein

Since Central Asian states gained independence in 1991, new regional military and security alliances have been created (some of which are Russian-led), new military partnerships with non-NATO countries have been established, a number of joint military exercises have been conducted, over a dozen high-profile incidents of violence and civil unrest have taken place, and military installations have been used by foreign militaries. While this activity gained attention, it has not been collectively compiled. A compilation of this activity can serve as a guide for current and future military and security involvement in Central Asia.



<https://community.apan.org/wg/tradoc-g2/fms0/m/fms0-monographs/194880>

(continued)



Continued: Northern Fleet Army Corps Command and Control Element

Source: Anna Korolkova, “Мощная группировка сил (Powerful grouping of forces),” *Na Strazhe Zapolyarya*, 28 September 2018.

The zone of responsibility is vast. However, the forces are commensurate: This large formation incorporates the [200th] Separate Pechengskaya Order of Kutuzov Motorized Rifle Brigade, the [80th] Arctic Separate Motorized Rifle Brigade, and the specially formed Separate Command and Control Battalion. The Separate Kirkenes Red-Banner [61st] Naval Infantry Brigade and the Northern Fleet’s Tactical Group based on the New Siberian Islands Archipelago are operationally subordinated to the corps....

The Northern Fleet’s Army Corps has its own Separate Command and Control Battalion. It is the responsibility of the battalion...to deploy the command and control posts ... of the corps’ ground forces, to give them technical and rear support, to organize communications, to carry out reconnaissance, and to control artillery fire.

The subunit is commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Sergey Krivchenko. According to him, in the 18 months since the battalion was created, it has become a unified collective that is capable of fulfilling its missions exactly and on time.

Within its structure there are two communications companies, two separate communications platoons, a guard platoon, and a support platoon. The personnel of the latter two are responsible for feeding and quartering servicemen and guarding the Army Corps Staff and officials. The guard platoon under the command of Sergeant Igor Zubarev, acting platoon commander, was deemed one of the best in the battalion based on the results of the winter training period.

When conducting drills, training sessions, and exercises of various formats and levels, the communications subunits’ duties include deploying the command post, which exercises continuous leadership of the force groupings and observes the battlefield, and also the Army Corps’ communications hub. The mobile communications hubs must be highly mobile and capable of being quickly deployed, taken down, and moved and must ensure communications not only on the spot but also on the move.

Captain Vladimir Boyko, commander of a communications company, said that the communications hub consists of several vehicles equipped with communications systems for various purposes. All of this mobile equipment has to be delivered to the designated area, deployed, camouflaged, tuned and must then maintain steady communications around the clock.

When it was being formed, the Command and Control Battalion was provided with the latest models of equipment that meets the requirements of protection, quality, reliability, stability, and secrecy of communications.

To resolve its most important tasks, the Northern Fleet Army Corps Separate Command and Control Battalion must operate its equipment to a high standard and improve the existing communications and command and control systems. So it is no wonder that the subunit has a tough selection process for its new personnel.... All the battalion’s servicemen undergo training either in their own subunit or in communications training centers.

The standard of vocational-official training of leadership personnel, officers and subunit commanders, is constantly being raised, as is the improvement of their practical preparedness, skills, abilities, and professional qualities. The most important thing is practical experience, which is gained during field exercises.

The battalion commander, Lt. Col. Sergey Krivchenko, stated that “Throughout the training year we conduct tactical special exercises, we hold a final control drill each month, and toward the end of the summer training period the battalion conducts a field exercise with control drills and a communications exercise under the direction of the fleet’s communications chief. At the end of the year there is a final check for the entire training year.”

Maj. Gen. Dmitriy Krayev, Commander of the Northern Fleet Army Corps, said that, as part of the 2018 training plan, during the winter training period the subunit’s subordinates conducted 87 company and battalion tactical exercises (with and without live firing) including exercises on the islands of the Novaya Zemlya and New Siberian Islands Archipelagos in cooperation with the Kola Flotilla ... and the Northern Fleet’s Air Force and Air Defense Army. In all, more than 1,050 training events involving small arms and crew-served weapons firing and approximately 820 motor movements took place in the corps.

Forces of the Northern Fleet Army Corps were also involved in the Vostok-2018 Operational-Strategic Command and Staff Exercise. On the eve of the large-scale maneuvers, a combined tactical exercise of forces of the Northern Fleet’s Arctic Group took place with Airborne Troops in Tiksi Bay. Subunits moved to the exercise both by air, by military transport aircraft of the 45th Air Force and Air Defense Army and the Russian Aerospace Forces, and by sea – by a detachment of warships of the Kola Flotilla....



Cold Weather Tor-M2DT Air Defense System Training for Arctic Duty

OE Watch Commentary: A surface-to-air missile battalion that has been enjoying the balmy weather in Yeysk, near the Crimea, will spend its Christmas much closer to the North Pole. The battalion is being refitted and trained in the new Arctic variant of the Tor-M2 (SA-15 Gauntlet) as the accompanying excerpted article reports. The Tor-M2DT is a short-to-medium range system that carries 16 missiles and can engage out to 12 kilometers with an altitude engagement that can range from 10 meters to 10 kilometers. It can reportedly engage four targets simultaneously while on the move. Its radar is effective out to 25 kilometers. It is designed to defeat cruise missiles, guided bombs, high-performance aircraft, helicopters, guided missiles and unmanned aerial vehicles. There are normally 12 launchers in a Tor battalion. Its articulated carrier has proven reliable in the Arctic. **End OE Watch Commentary (Grau)**

“The surface-to-air missile system’s vehicles have a unique all-terrain capability -- they can cross ditches and open water, and can maintain their performance in more than -50° Centigrade [-58° Fahrenheit].”

Source: “Northern Fleet Combined-Arms Formation To Receive First Battalion of Arctic Tor-M2DT Surface-To-Air Missile Systems in November,” *Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation*, 25 October 2018.

Lieutenant General Aleksandr Leonov, chief of the Russian Federation Armed Forces Air Defense Troops, announced this during a conversation with journalists. Under the state defense order, the manufacturer will transfer the systems to the Northern Fleet Combined-Arms Formation on the territory of the Air Defense Troops’ 726th Training Center in the city of Yeysk [Ейск] in the Kuban’. Once the systems have been transferred to a surface-to-air missile battalion’s combat crews, the servicemen will have to undergo retraining, perform combat teamwork training, and carry out an operational readiness exercise [boveyye stykovochnyye strelby].

The Tor-M2DT is an Arctic variant of the Tor-M2 system transported on the DT-30M articulated tracked transporter. The surface-to-air missile system’s vehicles have a unique all-terrain capability -- they can cross ditches and open water, and can maintain their performance in more than -50° Centigrade [-58° Fahrenheit]. They are able to engage targets just a few seconds after detecting them.

Surface-to-air missile systems from the Tor-M2 family are currently the most effective means of combating all types of airborne targets, including low-signature unmanned aerial vehicles and precision weapon warheads



© Vitaly V. Kuzmin

9K331MDT Tor-M2DT air defence system on DT-30PM transporter chassis.

Source: Vitaly Kuzmin Blog, <https://www.vitalykuzmin.net/Military/Victory-Day-Rehearsal-in-Moscow-3May2017/i-fXgTk98>, CC 4.0. (<https://www.vitalykuzmin.net/Copyright-policy>).



Spinning International Intrigues

OE Watch Commentary: When Syrian air defense forces inadvertently shot down a Russian IL-20 reconnaissance aircraft in mid-September, killing all 15 officers aboard, most of the major Russian-language media attributed the disaster to either what President Putin claimed was the result of a chain of tragic accidental circumstances or the connivance of Israeli pilots, who allegedly avoided the Syrian air defense by maneuvering close to the IL-20. Instead of allowing anti-Israeli propaganda to saturate the Russian information space, the Kremlin-sponsored media responded with extensive coverage regarding the deployment of the more advanced S-300 system to strengthen Syrian air defense, though this propaganda continued through other outlets.

Over the past 10-15 years, by creating numerous foreign-language media outlets, the Kremlin has pursued an effective strategy to ensure that its voice is heard within the global information space. These multi-lingual, Kremlin-sponsored media stations like the notable RT and Sputnik not only permit the Russian leadership to reach an international audience, but also allow them to tailor their message for a specific audience. The accompanying excerpt from an interview in the Russian-funded *Sputnik* Arabic news agency, which discussed the IL-20 disaster, illustrates how the Kremlin can spin a story to its own advantage.

The article begins by making clear that “the downing of the Russian IL-20 aircraft off the Syrian coast [was] caused by Israeli aggression on Syrian territories.” The article goes on to explain the motive behind the “Israeli aggression,” by asserting that “the Israeli state is not only the enemy of Syria and the Arab nation -- it constitutes the advanced base for the Western camp, in general, and the United States, in particular. The Israeli Air Force is the arm of this imperialist Western camp that constantly targets our region. The downing of the Russian IL-20 aircraft is undoubtedly a conspiracy, prompting President Putin to insist on an investigation because everything that happened was led by the United States.”

While the Kremlin would never allow the above paragraph to be published on its official website, it does promote this type of incendiary rhetoric on the international media outlets it controls. Global journalistic enterprises, like *Sputnik*-Arabic, not only allow the Russian leadership to avoid blame for a disaster like the IL-20 destruction, but show how the Kremlin works to spin even the most negative story into positive PR to support their geopolitical objectives. **End OE Watch Commentary (Finch)**

“...The downing of the Russian IL-20 aircraft is undoubtedly a conspiracy, prompting President Putin to insist on an investigation because everything that happened was led by the United States...”

Source: ضيف الحلقة الخبير العسكري رضا أحمد شريقي؛ والمحلل السياسي الروسي أندريه أونتيكوف Nizar Bush, “Seminar Guest: military expert Rida Ahmad Shurayqi and Russian political analyst Andrey Ontikov,” *Sputnik*, 4 October 2018. <https://goo.gl/r8ETZf>

Moscow's patience with Israeli unruliness, attacks on Syrian territories, and targeting of the positions of the Syrian Army that Russia supports in fighting global terrorism has run out. The downing of the Russian Il-20 aircraft off the Syrian coast -- caused by Israeli aggression on Syrian territories in an area not far from the Russian Humaymim Air Base -- prompted Russian decisiveness to respond to Israel and every other country thinking about attacking Syrian territory. Thus, President Vladimir Putin made the decision to provide the Syrian Army with the S-300 system that will protect Syrian airspace from missile attacks or airstrikes....

...Syrian military expert Rida Ahmad Shurayqi said: “It must be pointed out that the Israeli entity is not only the enemy of Syria and the Arab nation -- it constitutes the advanced base for the Western camp, in general, and the United States, in particular. The Israeli Air Force is the arm of this imperialist Western camp that constantly targets our region. The downing of the Russian Il-20 aircraft is undoubtedly a conspiracy, prompting President Putin to insist on an investigation because everything that happened was led by the United States. What Israel is doing is not only aimed at Syria but also against the Russian friends in Syria, in particular, and the axis confronting the United States, in general...”



Russian Air Force Ilyushin Il-20 (2012).

Source: Kirill Naumenko [CC BY-SA 3.0 GFDL 1.2, CC BY-SA 3.0 (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/>)], via Wikimedia Commons, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Russian_Air_Force_Ilyushin_Il-20_Naumenko-1.jpg.



Russian – Ukrainian Regional Conflict Seemingly Pervades Spiritual Plane

OE Watch Commentary: Within the framework of the ongoing regional conflict with Russia, the Ukrainian government recently achieved a long sought-after goal regarding the Ukrainian Orthodox Church: Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew of Constantinople (“first among equals” in the Eastern Orthodox faith) took the first step in formally granting autocephaly (independence) to the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, which had operated under the jurisdiction of the Russian Orthodox Church since 1686.

The Ukrainian Orthodox Church has been divided within three distinct groups since the end of the Cold War, the largest of which remained under the jurisdiction of the Moscow Patriarchate (the Russian Orthodox Church). In some regions within the far west of Ukraine, the Uniate or “Greek Catholic” Church, not the Orthodox Church, still predominates; however, the overriding majority of Ukrainians belong to the Orthodox Church. The Ecumenical Patriarchate, in conjunction with the announcement of the granting of autocephaly, also openly declared its wishes that the parties involved do not resort to physical or any other retaliatory acts in the aftermath of its announcement. The Russian Orthodox Church then formally severed ties with the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople, causing what could be the largest schism in the church since 1054.

The Russian Orthodox Church maintains close ties with the Russian government. President Putin regularly showcases the connectivity between the spiritual and the secular in modern Russia and the Russian Ministry of Defense has announced plans to build what will be the world’s third tallest Orthodox Cathedral in Moscow, dedicated to the armed forces. This follows the announcement almost 10 years ago, by then-President Medvedev, of the introduction of the military position of chaplain within the Russian armed forces.

As the Ukrainian government continues to consolidate this recent spiritual step forward – President Poroshenko and Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew signed an agreement on cooperation and coordination in Istanbul (formerly Constantinople) on 4 November – other national Orthodox churches have voiced opinions on the granting of autocephaly to Ukraine. The Serbian Orthodox Church (having its own issues with the Macedonian Orthodox Church, which unilaterally announced its independence from the Serbian Church in 1967) openly opposed Constantinople’s decision to grant Ukraine autocephaly in mid-October. According to the accompanying excerpted article, the Serbian Orthodox Church also noted its disagreement with the Ecumenical Patriarchate’s decision to rehabilitate the religious leaders of the two Ukrainian Orthodox groups not under the Moscow Patriarchate’s jurisdiction. This is important to note as the Serbian government continues to increase its security cooperation with Russia. **End OE Watch Commentary (Sarafian)**

“Meanwhile, the Russian Orthodox Church announced the complete cessation of Eucharistic communion with the Patriarchate of Constantinople.”



Petro Poroshenko and Patriarch Bartholomew sign an agreement “On cooperation and interaction between Ukraine and the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople.”

Source: Адміністрація Президента України [CC BY 4.0 (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>)], https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Порошенко_і_п._Варфоломії.jpg.

Source: “Сербская православная церковь не признала решение Константинополя по Украине (The Serbian Orthodox Church did not recognize the decision by Constantinople on Ukraine),” *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, 12 November 2018. <https://kp.ua/politics/622498-serbskaia-pravoslavnaia-tserkov-ne-pryznala-reshenye-konstantynopolia-po-ukrayne>

The Serbian Orthodox Church did not recognize Constantinople’s decision on Ukraine.

... the (Serbian Orthodox Bishops’) Council regrets that the Patriarchate of Constantinople made a canonically unfounded decision to rehabilitate and recognize the two leaders of the Ukrainian splinter groups (the leaders of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church – Kyiv Patriarchate and the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church)

This was preceded by a synod of the Ecumenical Patriarchate (of Constantinople), which took place on 11 October... the synod supported the provision of autocephaly for the Ukrainian church... Meanwhile, the Russian Orthodox Church announced the complete cessation of Eucharistic communion with the Patriarchate of Constantinople.



Negative Military Reporting

OE Watch Commentary: Over the past several years, the Kremlin and the Russian Ministry of Defense have become more restrictive regarding the publication of negative military information. Not only has material dealing with soldier casualties been classified, but there is a growing general tendency to avoid reporting any adverse material. Journalists are wary of being charged with revealing “state secrets,” while military personnel have been prohibited from using social media. There are still a handful of independent Russian sources who are willing to cover both the positive and negative in their military reporting. The excerpted recent blog entry describing the hazards of Russians volunteering to fight in Ukraine, from the relatively well-known military blogger, Denys Mokrushin (see: <https://twower.livejournal.com/>), serves as an apt example.

Mokrushin’s entry describes how a patriotic Russian military pensioner, decided to volunteer “to defend the Donbass in 2016,” only to discover that “the Russian military registration and enlistment office suspended the payment of his military pension on the grounds that he had entered military service in another state.” After publishing this story on his blog, Mokrushin was accused of either posting false information and/or “selling out to the Ukrainians for 30 pieces of silver.” To prove the story was true, Mokrushin asked the pensioner-volunteer to create a short video to describe his plight (see: <https://youtu.be/tKGuOzumDtI>). In the video, the pensioner displays his passport and the letter he received from the Volgograd Military District informing him that his retirement benefits had been canceled. He ends by appealing to his audience for help in restoring these benefits.

After the video was posted, some readers commented that the Russian bureaucracy was more powerful than the appeals to patriotism which had initially encouraged volunteers like this pensioner to defend Russian interests in the Donbas. Others suggested that this pensioner had indeed broken the law by serving as a mercenary in a foreign state and that he did not deserve a military pension. A few readers apologized to Mokrushin for questioning his integrity, while others insisted he was still serving Ukrainian interests by publishing such negative material.

Four-plus years ago, Russia began its not-so surreptitious military involvement in southeastern Ukraine. At the time, using its extensive media resources, the Kremlin appealed to Russians to help defend their ethnic brothers in the Donbas region. Now that this conflict has turned into an ugly stalemate, this same Kremlin-sponsored media appears reluctant to help those who responded to their call to arms. If nothing else, it appears that besides becoming mired in the Donbas region, this conflict continues to have a chilling effect upon Russian military reporting. **End OE Watch Commentary (Finch)**

“A few days ago, I wrote that one Russian military pensioner, who after leaving to defend the Donbass in 2016, the Russian military registration and enlistment office suspended the payment of his military pension on the grounds that he had entered military service in another state....”

Source: Denys Mokrushin, “Про фейк, который не фейк (Regarding the fake, which is not fake),” *Twower*, *Live Journal* blog post, 29 October 2018. <https://twower.livejournal.com/2314120.html>

A few days ago, I wrote that one Russian military pensioner, who after leaving to defend the Donbass in 2016, the Russian military registration and enlistment office suspended the payment of his military pension on the grounds that he had entered military service in another state....

Some commentators have doubted the authenticity of this information. Someone wrote sympathetically to me that I bought into a primitive fake of Ukrainian propaganda. Someone actually accused me that I intentionally spread this fake, having sold out for 30 pieces of silver. Like, “they paid you scoundrel, so you sold your soul to Ukraine.” Then I asked this serviceman of the DPR [Donetsk Peoples Republic] to record a video where he will confirm that this is all true and will show the letter from the military enlistment office.... Since the man was on duty, he was only able to record a video today.

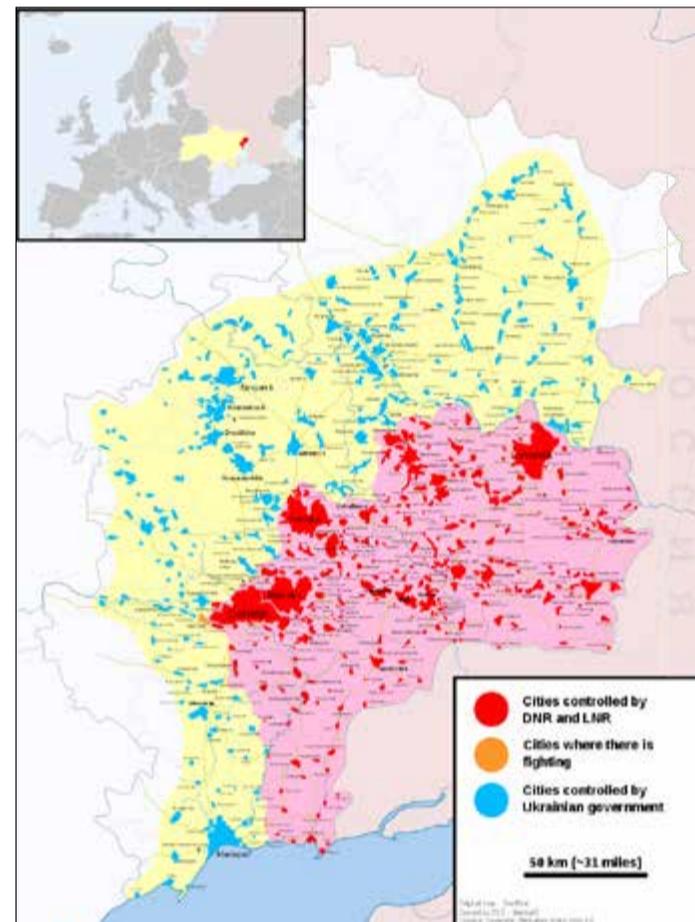
Reader Comments:

Imperia mir

In short, so. I am a “sympathetic commentator” and I offer you my sincere apologies. Still, the feeling of something incomprehensible in this story does not leave, but really, only a bureaucrat could make such a mess in a person’s heart. Disgusting.

sh00zz

...alas, there is the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation. Article 359. Mercenary part three: Participation of a mercenary in an armed conflict or military actions is punishable by imprisonment for a term of three to seven years with restriction of freedom for up to one year...



Map of the war in Donbass (2014).

Source: User:Marktaff, ZomBear [CC BY-SA 4.0 (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/>)], via Wikimedia Commons, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Map_of_the_war_in_Donbass.svg.



CSTO Peacekeeping in Ukraine?

OE Watch Commentary: Some Russian commentators have referred to the conflict in southeastern Ukraine as a “suitcase without any handles,” suggesting that the Kremlin has helped to create a situation which will not be easily moved. The current Kremlin strategy appears to be in a holding pattern, perhaps hoping that there will be a more pliable government in Kiev after the presidential elections scheduled for March 2019. In the interim, as the accompanying excerpt from the centrist daily *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* points out, Kremlin authorities are beginning to lay the groundwork for a possible Russian-led peacekeeping operation into the Donbas region under the auspices of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO).

The article begins by describing that one of the training objectives for “the Enduring Brotherhood 2018 maneuvers” (which took place 30 October-2 November), included “the rehearsal of tasks on the territory of a state that is not a member of collective defense.” Although CSTO members have conducted joint training exercises for the past decade, they have never been deployed to handle a crisis within a member state (Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, and Tajikistan). Despite this lack of genuine peacekeeping experience, the article states that CSTO forces might be deployed to handle “the instability resulting from sanctions and from the economic crisis in the former USSR countries [which] may lead to a change of their political regimes.” Given that the Kremlin just recently enacted sanctions against the government in Kiev, it is clear which “former USSR country” the article is referring to. Indeed, the article specifically states that “the southeast of Ukraine” lies within “the CSTO’s zone of responsibility.”

To buttress the argument that the CSTO must be prepared for a Ukraine peacekeeping contingency, the article asserts that “Ukraine and the NATO countries now want to deploy peacekeeping forces in the conflict area in the Donets Basin.” While such an assertion might be surprising to officials in Brussels, it reflects Kremlin concerns that Western participation in a future Donbas peacekeeping mission would likely limit the Kremlin’s ability to move the Donbas “suitcase” into Russian territory. The article concludes with comments from a Russian military expert who suggests that Russia will be able “to effectively defend its geopolitical interests in the countries of the former USSR through mechanisms linked to the collective defense system.” **End OE Watch Commentary (Finch)**

“...in the context of attempts by the West to isolate Russia, it [Russia] is finding opportunities, as previously, to effectively defend its geopolitical interests in the countries of the former USSR through mechanisms linked to the collective defense system...”

Source: Vladimir Mukhin, “Войска ОДКБ нацелились на Кавказ и Донбасс (The CSTO Troops Have Targeted the Caucasus and the Donbas),” *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, 30 October 2018. http://www.ng.ru/politics/2018-10-30/2_7343_odkb.html

The scenario of the Enduring Brotherhood-2018 maneuvers suggests the rehearsal of tasks on the territory of a state that is not a member of collective defense.

On Tuesday [30 October], the Enduring Brotherhood-2018 (NB-2018) peacekeeping maneuvers of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) began in the Urals. The collective defense system’s member-countries have been regularly conducting such exercises for almost 10 years. Although the CSTO peacekeeping forces have not been used in a real situation for the entire post-Soviet period. True, if one evaluates the Enduring Brotherhood-2018 scenario, they are already prepared for “an operation by the CSTO Collective Peacekeeping Forces (CPF) in the Central Asian region, under a UN Security Council resolution, on a CSTO non-member-state’s territory.”

...Such representative participation by the security structures of the Russian Federation’s allied countries suggests that, first, the CSTO leadership attaches special importance to integrated performance of missions for ensuring the internal security not only of the states that belong to the collective security system, but also of the post-Soviet space overall. And, second, it is possible that the instability resulting from sanctions and from the economic crisis in the former USSR countries may lead to a change of their political regimes. For Russia and its allies, such a scenario is unacceptable. And, evidently, for this reason a police factor is present during the rehearsal of the Enduring Brotherhood-2018 maneuvers.

The CSTO press release reports that, in the course of fulfilling the Enduring Brotherhood-2018 assignments, the troops, “in cooperation with militia (police) personnel, will rehearse CSTO CPF subunits’ operations in executing tasks for countering mass disturbances.” Such tasks -- according to the scenario of maneuvers -- will be rehearsed in a state that is “not a CSTO member.” Currently, except for Afghanistan, there are no countries in the region in which there can be mass riots and where reconciliation operations are required. However, within the CSTO’s zone of responsibility, there are many such zones in the post-Soviet space -- they are the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, the southeast of Ukraine, and Transnistria.

The expert community believes that such CSTO CPF missions may be performed not only on Central Asian region territory, but also in any location within the post-Soviet space. As is known, Ukraine and the NATO countries now want to deploy peacekeeping forces in the conflict area in the Donets Basin....

...Military expert Lieutenant General Yuriy Netkachev commented to NG that “in the context of attempts by the West to isolate Russia, it [Russia] is finding opportunities, as previously, to effectively defend its geopolitical interests in the countries of the former USSR through mechanisms linked to the collective defense system and to bilateral military contacts with the Commonwealth of Independent States countries.”



Changes for the Collective Security Treaty Organization

OE Watch Commentary: The Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) has undergone several significant changes since its creation. Notable changes include the creation of a collective operation reaction force (consisting of contributions of battalions from member states and Russian aircraft posted in Kyrgyzstan) and revising the organization's articles to better respond to a conflict involving a member state and allow for the deployment of a peacekeeping force through a UN mandate. The accompanying excerpted article looks at the results of the recent CSTO summit held 8 November in Astana, Kazakhstan and it notes a couple of changes as well as issues that have yet to be resolved.

The article from *Fergana*, a Russian-language news website based in Moscow with reporters in Central Asia, includes a statement from the leaders of CSTO members claiming that they “have agreed to equip the collective forces with modern types of weapons and military equipment.” CSTO members already have the benefit of purchasing weapons and equipment from the Russian defense at lower prices usually reserved for the Russian armed forces, but no other details about equipping the collective force appear in the article. The article goes on to note the establishment of the CSTO Crisis Response Center, which will work “to identify potential threats to security.” The center had been a couple of years in the making and represents some of the organization's efforts to improve intelligence sharing on threats. This comes alongside the announcement that before the summit, “members agree to create a unified list of terrorist organizations.”

While the article includes the changes within the CSTO, it also mentions that member states “did not agree on a plan for the creation of a unified air defense and missile defense system” and could not reach an agreement for the next secretary general. The resolution to create a unified air defense system could happen in the next year or so, but the issue of the secretary general has been more contentious. Armenian General Yuri Khachaturov was officially removed as the secretary general in early November as he faces charges in his home country for his involvement in a civil unrest incident in 2008. The appointment of the next secretary general is causing a dispute between CSTO members, particularly Armenia and Belarus. The CSTO members agreed to resolve the appointment of the next secretary general at another summit in early December and it could be a good indicator of the organization's future direction. **End OE Watch Commentary (Stein)**

Source: “Лидеры стран ОДКБ договорились оснастить коллективные силы современным оружием (Leaders of the CSTO countries have agreed to equip the collective forces with modern weapons),” *Fergana*, 9 November 2018. <https://www.fergananews.com/news/33923>

The leaders of the countries of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) have agreed to equip the collective forces with modern types of weapons and military equipment...In the declaration, the full text of which has been posted on the website of the Kremlin, states that it will raise the effectiveness of joint measures for operations and training.

The President of Kazakhstan noted the section on military cooperation. According to him, member states completed the reform of the CSTO headquarters and are now finishing preparations for the full time operation of the CSTO Crisis Response Center, which is designated to identify potential threats to security...

At the same time, member states of the organization did not agree on a plan for the creation of a unified air defense and missile defense system...It was also not agreed on who will become the new secretary general of the organization...

...Earlier, on October 30, at the meeting of the (CSTO) parliamentary assembly in Moscow, the members agree to create a unified list of terrorist organizations...

“At the same time, member states of the organization did not agree on a plan for the creation of a unified air defense and missile defense system.”



CSTO Collective Security Council meeting in narrow format (November 2018).
Source: Russian Presidency, <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/59068/photos/56421>, CC 4.0.



Armenian's Fighter Acquisition Complete?

OE Watch Commentary: Armenia's Minister of Defense David Tonoyan has noted several areas of reform that are needed for the country's armed forces since assuming his position earlier this year. He has previously stated that there was a priority on the acquisition of a new multirole fighter and as the accompanying excerpted articles report, it continues to be discussed. The articles, from the government news agency *Armenpress*, report from an interview with Tonoyan on a military loan from Russia for \$100 million and the possibility of acquiring the Swedish JAS 39 Gripen (manufactured by Saab). Tonoyan spoke of "details on the supplies that are being negotiated right now" as part of the loan, as well as another loan that "does not have to be taken out with Russia." The Armenian government, even prior to Tonoyan's tenure as defense minister, stated that it would look for alternative partners instead of acquiring weapons and equipment largely from Russia. It has been reported that the Armenian government received a proposal on the Swedish JAS 39, but as Tonoyan stated: "There has been no decision on the Gripen. There are other proposals from other partners." The acquisition of the Russian Su-30 has previously come up in discussions, but Tonoyan mentioned nothing about it in this interview. There has been no indication that the \$100 million military loan from Russia is tied to the acquisition of new fighters, but the Russian government has worked to maintain close security cooperation with the Armenian government over the years. Tonoyan has not stated when the government will announce its final decision on acquiring multirole fighters, but it appears that a deal is moving closer to being finalized. **End OE Watch Commentary (Stein)**

"There are other proposals from other partners."

Source: "Подписан Военный кредитный договор с РФ в размере 100 миллионов долларов (The military loan agreement with the Russian Federation in the amount of \$100 million has been signed)," *Armenpress*, 12 November 2018. <https://armenpress.am/rus/news/954230.html>

"...We have not completed negotiations for supplies. The agreement is signed. There are some details on the supplies that are being negotiated right now," (Tonoyan) said...the Ministry of Defense is exploring the possibilities of a new military loan. He noted the loan does not have to be taken out with Russia.

Source: "В МО Армении нет решения о приобретении шведских истребителей Gripen: Давид Тоноян (There is no decision in the Defense Ministry of Armenia on the acquisition of the Swedish fighter Gripen: David Tonoyan)," *Armenpress*, 12 November 2018. <https://armenpress.am/rus/news/954191.html>

No decision on the acquisition of Swedish fighters was made... (said) Defense Minister of Armenia David Tonoyan, commenting on the acquisition of the Swedish JAS-39 fighter..."There has been no decision on the Gripen. There are other proposals from other partners..."



Saab JAS-39 Gripen (Czech Air Force).

Source: © Milan Nykodym, Czech Republic [CC BY-SA 2.0 (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/2.0/>)], [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Saab_JAS-39_Gripen_\(Czech_Air_Force\)_\(6417854291\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Saab_JAS-39_Gripen_(Czech_Air_Force)_(6417854291).jpg).



Estonian Analysis of Russian Threat

OE Watch Commentary: Before the instances of Russian military involvement in Georgia or Ukraine, Estonia fell victim to a Russian-sponsored cyber-attack in April 2007. This attack not only exploited existing tensions between ethnic Russians and Estonians by spreading false information about the status of a Soviet-era statue, but also damaged Estonia’s digital infrastructure. The response from Estonia and NATO was to establish the Cooperative Cyber Defense Centre of Excellence in Tallinn. As described in the accompanying excerpt from the Estonian news source *ERR.ee*, this response was discussed in a recent interview with the outgoing Commander of the Defense Forces in Estonia, General Riho Terras, who commented that “Estonia has never been as safe as it is today.”

According to General Terras, while NATO and the West remain peaceful, “Russia considers itself to be in war.” He goes on to describe Kremlin behavior as resembling “a bigheaded bully in a park in the dark who is not really equal with his opponent and who, for that reason, wants to frighten [his opponent].” General Terras asserts that instead of confronting NATO directly, which is impossible for Russia as it does not have the same strength, Putin resorts to “some action below the fog line which can certainly not be called war yet.”

General Terras states that the Western response to these threats from Russia is “to ensure that Putin also believes in NATO.” Following the aggressive actions Russia has taken in recent years, Terras is increasingly confident that Estonia is safe from a military attack from Russia because Putin “believes in [NATO] today much more than he believed in it five years ago.” **End OE Watch Commentary (Dimmick)**

“[Sildam] What do you think, does Russian President Vladimir Putin believes in NATO?”

[Terras] I think that he believes in it today much more than he believed in it five years ago.”



Russian population of Estonia by county, 1 January 2010.

Source: Abarmot [Public domain], from Wikimedia Commons, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Russians_in_Estonia_2010.png.

Source: Thomas Sildam, “Kindral Terras: nüüd usub Putin NATO-sse rohkem kui viie aasta eest (General Terras: Putin now believes in NATO more than five years ago),” *ERR.ee*, 23 October 2018. <https://www.err.ee/871523/kindral-terras-nuud-usub-putin-nato-sse-rohkem-kui-viie-aasta-est>

[Sildam] Is Estonia a frontline state?

[Terras] No, definitely not. Estonia has never been as safe as it is today, throughout all those harsh storms of the world.

[Sildam] In response to a question whether Russia intends to attack Estonia, you have said: “I do not know that. But I believe in NATO. And our main task is to ensure that Putin also believes in NATO.” What do you think, does Russian President Vladimir Putin believes in NATO?

[Terras] I think that he believes in it today much more than he believed in it five years ago.

[Sildam] As the commander of the defense forces you have said that “you cannot steamroll our state within a few hours.” How long will it take?

[Terras] The last time, the fight lasted for 50 years but we regained our independence.

[Sildam] How likely do you think it is that Estonia will come under a military attack?

[Terras] The probability exists but I cannot calculate the percentage. The most important thing is to do everything to minimize this probability.

[Sildam] You once compared Putin’s Russia with a bigheaded bully in a park in the dark who is not really equal with his opponent and who, for that reason, wants to frighten [his opponent], resort to cheap shots. Why the park in the dark? Russia is acting openly and in broad daylight.

[Terras] That depends. At the time of the annexation of the Crimea and the attack against Eastern Ukraine, (Russia) tried to employ methods of the dark park, while denying all its activities. It has continued on the cyber front, in Syria, etc.

[Sildam] Yet, their muddy footprints are all over the place.

[Terras] They are. Just like muddy footprints in the dark park become visible when the daylight comes.

[Sildam] Is NATO, and broadly speaking the democratic world, in war?

[Terras] It is sad that Russia considers itself to be in war. The democratic world has perhaps not yet realized this. There is some action below fog line which can certainly not be called war yet. So – no, we are not in war.



Closer Russian-Cuban Relations

OE Watch Commentary: A key tenet of current Russian foreign policy could be summed up as “the enemy of my enemy is my friend.” The Kremlin continues to strengthen ties with those countries which share an antagonism toward the US, for instance, Cuba. The accompanying excerpts, the first of which comes from the pro-Kremlin source, *Izvestiya*, describe the highlights of a recent Kremlin visit by the leader of Cuba, Miguel Diaz-Canel.

The first excerpt begins by referring to “the strategic, allied nature of relations between [Russia and Cuba] ... and the concurrence of positions on practically all relevant issues on the international agenda.” It describes their “mutually beneficial infrastructure projects and military-technical cooperation,” asserting that the “bilateral ties are literally permeated by the enduring historical bonds of friendship, mutual sympathy, respect, and solidarity.” The article focuses upon Russian initiatives to restore its economic ties to Cuba via “joint production of pharmaceuticals,” while “Russian energy companies are working effectively on the island” to “help support Havana’s energy independence and self-sufficiency in the face of the US embargo.” The article concludes by suggesting that Cuba may play a role in an era of “heightened re-militarization of international relations,” pointing out that “active preparation is underway for the deployment of a ground station of the Russian GLONASS [Global Navigation Satellite System]” in the country.

The second excerpt, from the Kremlin-supported *Sputnik*, announces that Russia plans “on giving Cuba a loan worth 38 million euros (\$43.25 million)” to purchase Russian military equipment. The final excerpt, from the official Russian news agency *Interfax*, quotes State Duma Defense Committee head Vladimir Shamanov, who suggests that “in response to the United States’ withdrawal from the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF Treaty), ... a Russian military presence in Cuba could be an option.” During the Cold War, the USSR regarded Cuba as a close ally and used the island nation as a valuable pawn in its geostrategic struggle with the US. Recent events suggest that today’s Kremlin leadership maybe looking at adopting a similar Cuban strategy. **End OE Watch Commentary (Finch)**

“It is too early to talk about Russia’s possible decisions in response to the United States’ withdrawal from the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF Treaty), but a Russian military presence in Cuba could be an option....”

Source: Aleksandr Vedrussov, “Старый друг (Old Friend),” *Izvestiya*, November 2018. <https://iz.ru/808771/aleksandr-vedrussov/staryi-drug>

The first official visit outside of Latin America by Miguel Diaz-Canel, Chairman of the Council of State and Council of Ministers of Cuba, was not only symbolically significant but also pragmatically productive for both Havana and Moscow. Talks between the Russian and Cuban leadership not only took place in a friendly and businesslike atmosphere, but they confirmed the strategic, allied nature of relations between the countries and the concurrence of our positions on practically all relevant issues on the international agenda....

From mutually beneficial infrastructure projects and military-technical cooperation to such noncommercial gestures of goodwill as, for example, Russian assistance in restoring the golden surface of the dome of the Havana Capitol Building ahead of the 500th anniversary of the Cuban capital, our countries’ bilateral ties are literally permeated by the enduring historical bonds of friendship, mutual sympathy, respect, and solidarity....

...That is precisely why Russia is trying to participate in Cuba’s socioeconomic development projects into 2030 and beyond as actively as possible. Joint production of pharmaceuticals unmatched anywhere in the world has already been established, and Russian energy companies are working effectively on the island. Among other things, they help support Havana’s energy independence and self-sufficiency in the face of the US embargo....

Today, the strategic balance between great powers has again been upset. And once again, it is through no fault or initiative of our own. The announced withdrawal of Washington from the INF Treaty and the threat of the lapse of START-III will mean reevaluating fundamental agreements in the military sphere and a heightened re-militarization of international relations. Russia is absolutely opposed to the dismantling of the existing global security architecture but has already had to take into account its potential consequences in practice. Currently, active preparation is underway for the deployment of a ground station of the Russian GLONASS [Global Navigation Satellite System] in Cuba.

Source: “Russia May Lend \$43Mln to Cuba Under Defense Cooperation Program,” *Sputnik*, 2 November 2018. <https://sputniknews.com/military/201811021069466230-russia-cuba-defense-cooperation/>

Russia intends to sign an agreement in mid-November on giving Cuba a loan worth 38 million euros (\$43.25 million) as part of the two countries’ defense cooperation agenda, Russian Deputy Finance Minister Sergey Storchak told reporters...

Source: “Шаманов: Ответом на выход США из ДРСМД может быть военное присутствие России на Кубе (Shamanov: Russian military presence in Cuba may be possible response to U.S. quitting INF Treaty),” *Interfax*, 30 October 2018. <http://www.interfax-russia.ru/print.asp?id=979038&type=view>

It is too early to talk about Russia’s possible decisions in response to the United States’ withdrawal from the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF Treaty), but a Russian military presence in Cuba could be an option, State Duma Defense Committee head Vladimir Shamanov told Interfax.

“We need at the minimum the Cuban government’s consent to build up our military presence in Cuba. After all, this issue is more political than military, and perhaps it’s too early today to talk about some specific measures in response to the U.S.’ possible withdrawal from the INF Treaty. An active phase of the assessment of the consequences is currently under way, and the assessment will be followed by proposals,” Shamanov said on Tuesday.

“I would not rule out that the matter could be addressed at the upcoming meeting with the Cuban leader in Moscow,” he said....



From “Informationized” to “Intelligent”: Chinese Military Aviation Prepares for the Future

OE Watch Commentary: The Zhuhai Airshow, China’s massive biennial aviation exhibition, is frequently used to show off both technological progress and hint at future directions. In an interview with Wang Mingliang, a professor at the PLA Air Force Command College in Beijing and frequent media commentator on Chinese military affairs, noted in the accompanying excerpted article that the focus of this airshow was unmanned systems. According to Wang, intelligent warfare [智能化战争] is an emerging global evolution of informationized warfare [信息化战争] that was characterized by precision guided weapons. Wang believes the new form of warfare will be decentralized, fast moving and stealthy, but ultimately defined by self-arranging networked components.

A key characteristic will be maneuverability, including hypersonic capability. Currently hypersonics encompass a wide range of ballistic and maneuvering systems capable of reaching speeds over Mach 5. These connected systems will range dramatically in size, and likely require delivery vehicles, such as transport aircraft, or stealthy fighter aircraft, such as the J-20.

An example of the type of aircraft that will dominate this new type of warfare was on display at the airshow. Appearing for the first time, the CH-7 is a stealthy Unmanned Combat Aerial Vehicle (UCAV). Produced by China Aerospace Science and Technology Corporation, one of China’s primary aerospace companies, the CH-7 is slated to be test flown next year and begin mass production by 2022. Overall, Wang believes that the airshow is a solid indication of the progress China’s aviation industry has made and its focus on preparing for the next generation of warfare.

End OE Watch Commentary (Wood)

“Intelligent decision-making systems are the core (of this new type of warfare), consisting of large, medium, small, and micro systems, manned and unmanned, stealth and non-stealth weapons, forming a group from a dispersed deployment, concentrated numbers and capabilities to carry out operations.”



Wing Loong II front view, Dubai Air Show 2017.

Source: Mztourist [CC BY-SA 4.0 (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/>)], from Wikimedia Commons, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Wing_Loong_II_fron_view.jpg.

Source: “军事专家王明亮：从中国航展看未来智能化战争 (Military Expert Wang Mingliang: Seeing the Future of Intelligent Warfare at the China Aviation Expo),” *Xinhua*, 11 November 2018. http://www.81.cn/jwgz/2018-11/11/content_9341000.htm

According to Wang Mingliang, based on qualities emerging from theoretical research, concept development, technology testing and weapons development in some countries, intelligent warfare [智能化战争] can be defined as a form of war having intelligent decision-making systems at the core, reliant upon with a new information networks, carried out with traditional weapons, high-energy weapons, and new energy weapons.

“High-energy weapons refer to ‘hypersonics,’ that is, weapons that fly higher, faster, and farther.” New energy weapons refer to new concept weapons, namely laser weapons, kinetic weapons, etc., that are fundamentally different from physical and chemical [propellant, i.e., firearms] weapons, in their mechanism and operation. These features will totally change the rules of warfare.

Wang Mingliang further said that the operational mode of intelligent warfare will be distributed operations. “Intelligent decision-making systems are the core (of this new type of warfare), consisting of large, medium, small, and micro systems, manned and unmanned, stealth and non-stealth weapons, forming a group from a dispersed deployment, concentrated numbers and capabilities to carry out operations.”

The basic components of this kind of combat are large, medium, small and micro unmanned weapons and their platforms. “At this year’s air show, various types of drones and unmanned combat vehicles were revealed all at once. Although there is no special aerial platform on display, many combat aircraft embodied by the [J-20 fighter] can be used as platforms for unmanned weapons in the future.”

The operational unit of distributed operations will be small combat systems. “You can call it a group.” Wang Mingliang said that they could detect and evaluate, and they can make decisions, assign tasks, and implement strikes. Separated from each other but connected by networks, these groups can achieve concentrations of force.”



Gaining a Better Understanding of Future Intelligent Warfare through a Chinese Lens

OE Watch Commentary: Over the past decades, the world has undergone an evolution of disruptive technologies that have transitioned from mechanized warfare to informatized warfare. The next evolution is expected to bring in artificial intelligence technologies and China is determined to lead the way. The accompanying excerpted article not only “paints a portrait” of what intelligent warfare is shaping up to look like in the future, but it also explains the importance of innovation in new combat methods, formats, and concepts.

According to the article, published in *Xinhua*, there are three developmental phases in which science and technology go through before transforming the science of warfare. The first phase is “initial entry.” The second is “ongoing support.” The final phase is “eventual dominance.” By looking at current developments in artificial technology development and the degree to which they are applied in military matters, the author estimates that the technology is currently “in the initial entry phase and is rapidly moving towards the ongoing support phase of development.”

The author believes that, while information systems assist humans in combat, intelligent systems will eventually replace humans in combat. Mobile internet, big data, cloud computing, machine learning, and biomimetic technologies are examples of “intelligent systems,” and are expected to one day have disruptive impacts on warfare. Combat power will shift from being human driven to one driven by intelligent systems. Methods that drive command and control will shift from one that is currently assisted by information systems, to one in which artificial intelligence technology will allow command and control systems to become autonomous. Finally, humans who have long been on the front line of the battlefield will be replaced by autonomous systems and therefore, this new confrontation between unmanned systems will disrupt people’s traditional understanding of battlefield combat methods.

The author points out that through systematic research, four “classical types of intelligent combat” will be possible. First, “swarming” will increase effectiveness through quantity. Second, “Trojan horse-type combat” will enable more covert maneuvers or repositioning of systems. Third, the “autonomous-type combat” will be unmanned combat systems requiring autonomous sensing, judgement and decision-making capabilities and will make up for human shortfalls (i.e.: slower reactions). Finally, “disability-type combat” in which unmanned platforms will target, paralyze, and destroy key components of enemy combat system-of-systems.

In the concluding paragraph, the article eloquently stresses the importance innovation has to the development of new systems, technology, ideas and concepts. The author stresses the importance of not only embracing the new technologies but also the concepts and methods/formats in which they will be used. Without doing so, ideas will become outdated and are likely to “restrain the arrival of radical change.” History has taught the importance of a willingness to change tactics to fit the scene and related technologies. In short, the author is urging China to be aggressive in and willing to make breakthroughs in technology and to embrace “new combat forms, and initiate a new combat era.” **End OE Watch Commentary (Hurst)**

Source: Lu Zhisheng, “为未来智能化战争画个像 (Painting a Portrait of Future Intelligent Warfare),” *Xinhua*, 18 October 2018. http://www.xinhuanet.com/mil/2018-10/18/c_129974033.htm

Warfare will soon enter a stage of autonomous confrontation between unmanned systems where reconnaissance and strike decisions will occur in seconds, and the characteristics of an “unmanned, shapeless, and silent” battlefield will become increasingly visible day by day. Science and technology (S&T) generally transforms warfare by going through three necessary developmental phases, namely initial entry, ongoing support, and eventual dominance. Looking at current AI technology developments and their degree of application in military matters, especially in actual practice in the Syria war, AI technology is currently in the initial entry phase and is rapidly moving towards the ongoing support phase of development.

If information systems assist humans in combat, then intelligent systems replace humans in combat. Intelligent systems are represented by technology groups, such as mobile internet, Big Data, cloud computing, machine learning, and biomimetic technologies will have fundamental, long-term, and disruptive impacts on warfare.

...The direct integration of humans and weapons is gradually transitioning to the relative separation of humans from weapons. Following the historical path of war, advanced technologies tend to catalyze the birth of new weapons and promote changes in how humans and weapons are integrated...

...In the future, with the sufficient development of AI technology, intelligent command and control systems will possess relatively powerful autonomous control and autonomous command capabilities and be capable of autonomously capturing information, assessing circumstances, making decisions, and handling situations relatively independently. This will create a new state of affairs; as the assistance of humans by information systems transitions to the partial replacement of humans by intelligent systems, traditional understandings of human command and control methods will become somewhat disrupted...

...In a future where unmanned systems are widely applied on battlefields, those in direct confrontation on the front lines are likely to be a series of unmanned systems and will not involve the human casualties normally seen in traditional battlefields...

...In the future, expensive weapon systems might be divisible into large numbers of small, cheap, and dispersed unmanned platforms that conduct highly efficient strikes against combat targets by way of swarm saturation attacks that transform quantitative advantages into qualitative advantages.

Every revolution within the history of human warfare has to varying degrees broken the multi-leveled “shackles” worn by combat personnel. However, while “shackles” with identifiable form are often easily broken, those “formless shackles” brought about by outdated ideas are far more likely to restrain the arrival of radical change. On the precipice of the arrival of unmanned combat, we must be bolder in innovation, be braver in making breakthroughs, actively seek change, enthusiastically acknowledge new combat forms, and initiate a new combat era.

(continued)



Continued: Gaining a Better Understanding of Future Intelligent Warfare through a Chinese Lens

“Warfare will soon enter a stage of autonomous confrontation between unmanned systems where reconnaissance and strike decisions will occur in seconds, and the characteristics of an ‘unmanned, shapeless, and silent’ battlefield will become increasingly visible day by day.”



AVIC Cloud Shadow at Dubai Air Show 2017.

Source: Mztourist [CC BY-SA 4.0 (https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0)], from Wikimedia Commons, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:AVIC_Cloud_Shadow_side_view.jpg

1986



2016



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Local Companies Provide Logistics Support During PLA Joint Exercise

OE Watch Commentary: China appears to be improving its use of civilian assets in joint exercises. An October 2018 exercise meant to test the PLA’s interoperability and ability to maintain air superiority highlights the positive impact civilian transport and technical personnel can have on operations. Two examples of civilian support during the exercise mentioned in the accompanying excerpted article particularly deserve attention.

When a naval commander required an emergency support unit to be deployed to support PLA Naval Aviation operations on an island, a transportation unit was able to call on local civilian transportation companies’ flatbed trucks as well as passenger and roll-on/roll-off ships to get the equipment and personnel where they needed to go. A second area where civilian resources played an important role during the exercise was “recovery” after a simulated air attack against an airbase. Responding to “various degrees of damage” to several fighter aircraft, a group of air force technicians, bolstered by eight civilian technicians from a local factory, were able to replace damaged components and get the aircraft back in the air after an hour.

The exercise also made use of modular “containerized” barracks and support buildings that were built and transported to deployment areas by local companies. The article mentioned that use of civilian contractors and materials made it easier to conceal the units’ deployment. In many ways, this exercise represents the “nuts-and-bolts” of what China’s Military-Civil Fusion strategy is all about—putting the procedures in place to allow full utilization of all available resources in a crisis. **End OE Watch Commentary (Wood)**



JH-7A of the PLANAF seen at Yantai Laishan International Airport.
Source: Czipo01 [CC BY-SA 3.0 (https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0) or GFDL (http://www.gnu.org/copyleft/fdl.html)], via Wikimedia Commons, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Jh-7a_naval_yt.png.

“At the assembly site, you could see that an airbase engineering technical service group coordinating quickly assembling the container-style living quarters produced by local companies.”

Source: “军民融合在‘战时’的威力有多大 (The Power of Military Civil Fusion During ‘Wartime’),” *China Youth Daily*, 16 November 2018. http://kj.81.cn/content/2018-11/16/content_9347122.htm

In late October, the PLA held a joint PLA Air Force and PLA Navy offense/defense combat exercise involving multiple branches and units in southern China. During the exercise, the “red” and “blue” forces competed fiercely for air supremacy. The air defense operations were in full swing, and the rear logistics support group codenamed “cavalry” [驰援, lit. gallop to the rescue] began operations.

In a break with past exercises, the 13 rear support elements [分队] of the Southern Theater Air Force Support Department were assigned six local [civilian] support forces for the first time, and were co-organized with the Navy and the Joint Logistics Support Force to for integrated and realistic field exercises.

“In order to ensure that none of the equipment or vehicles are left behind, we have established 16 core repair stations along the way with local auto repair manufacturers, ensuring that every 100 kilometers there are professional maintenance technicians and rapid-repair vehicles for all types of vehicles!” The Theater Command Air Force Ground Equipment Division leader explained that in recent years, the Logistics Support Department organizations have established communication and coordination with all of the various battlefield support resources such as local transportation facilities, airport terminals, oil storage facilities, warehouses, and maintenance and repair facilities. The emergency response mechanism can quickly resolve the question of what is available for logistics support.

After the emergency detachment completes the maneuver by means of motorized marching and railway transportation, it deploys in the deployment area, opens a command organization, and builds a field camping area. Before the departure of each detachment, all the field battle boxes and camping gears were uniformly distributed according to the standards of field support and operation, and the field self-protection was implemented throughout the entire process.

At the assembly site, you could see that an airbase engineering technical service group coordinating quickly assembling the container-style living quarters produced by local companies. Group leader Yang Fuli [杨夫礼] said that the container-style barracks are not only fast and convenient, but also easy to conceal. This is the first time they have explored the military-civilian field bivouac model in realistic conditions.

The leaders of the Southern Theater Air Force Support Department also explained that after local mobilization forces have fully deployed within the required time limit, all of them will be assigned to the emergency support unit for on-the-spot training, and cooperate with each other to carry out specialization and refinement, while providing support for the PLA forces.



An Instant PLA: Just Add 3D Printing

by Wilson VornDick

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For the full article, see: <https://jamestown.org/program/an-instant-pla-just-add-3d-printing/>

OE Watch Commentary: In the PRC, the promise of 3D printing has stretched the boundaries of possible future applications. The PRC is pushing ahead with innovative ways of employing 3D printing across all sectors of its economy, from prosthetics to titanium-based aerospace parts, to a sustainably-built bus stop shelter outside Shanghai. The PRC is also pioneering concepts and applications for 3D printing of materiel, weaponry, and munitions for use by the People's Liberation Army (PLA). As Wang Feiyue, a director at both the National Defense University of Technology and the Chinese Academy of Sciences states, quoting an old Chinese proverb, one must “cross the river by feeling the stones” (摸着石头过河)

3D printing falls under the broad umbrella of advanced manufacturing technology which is divided between “subtractive” and “additive” manufacturing. Subtractive manufacturing is the process in which an item is created by the removal of material through methods such as drilling or lathing. Conversely, additive manufacturing (AM) is the process of adding material to create an item. Pioneered in the 1980s but still considered a new form of AM, 3D printing is the ability to fabricate objects by constructing them over a period of minutes, hours, or days using a “printer” capable of laying down one very precisely defined layer of a material after another, eventually forming the completed object.

It is important to note that the field of 3D printing, as part of AM, remains dynamic as new concepts, technical definitions, standards, techniques, and follow-up technologies evolve. As such, PRC sources sometimes refer to 3D printing and AM as one in the same, while other sources make minor distinctions between the two based on the type of material created or process employed.

Even though Western standards identify upwards of ten 3D printing methods, the PRC sources reviewed in 2015 list only six 3D printing methods. The six processes include: Fused Deposition Modeling (熔融沉积成型), Selected Laser Sintering (选择性激光烧结), Selective Laser Melting (选择性激光熔融), Stereolithography Appearance (立体光刻), Electron Beam Melting (电子束熔化), and Laminated Object Manufacturing (分层实体制造).

AM aligns with China's national strategic objective to become a science and technology superpower (科技强国) through initiatives at all levels of government. Because 3D printing relies heavily on advances in both software and hardware, 3D printing falls squarely in broader efforts within China to promote “informatization” (信息化). Furthermore, advances in 3D printing can be used to boost not only civilian industries, but also military ones as well, making it a good fit for the PRC's program of “military-civil fusion” or “civil-military integration” (军民融合). Two especially noteworthy programs in the context of 3D printing and civil military fusion are “Made in China 2025” and the PRC's 13th Five-Year-Plan.

Linking his support to these state-directed efforts and the “Thousand Talents Program” (千人计划), Wang Feiyue champions the integration of fields such as big data (大数据) and 3D printing with Chinese intelligence and military capabilities. In Wang's view, 3D printing offers three advantages: flexibility, production of both simple and complex items, and production capability for a large inventory and a variety of items. Advancing his assessment beyond 3D printing, Wang augurs a broader swath of the future digital landscape in which advances in cyberspace synch with advances 3D printing. He concludes that existing military systems “must improve and transform” as a result. If that can be achieved, it will aid in the goals toward national rejuvenation and fulfillment of the “Chinese Dream” (中国梦). However, he ominously warns that if China does not properly align and balance between the civilian and military systems, such as 3D printing, then it could spell disaster on par with the Soviet Union's collapse.

Chinese sources appeared to be mixed on the potential of AM for China, viewing it as both a threat and opportunity. Some viewed 3D printing as a threat because it challenges traditional manufacturing techniques and interests within the PRC. Meanwhile, others expressed fear and anxiety that if China does not become a major player in 3D printing, it could lose critical ground in leveraging this new technology. At the same time, some found that 3D printing is pregnant with possibilities for China to “regain market share in advanced manufacturing” and “leapfrog” global competitors in this developing field. In a follow-up analysis on the aviation and aerospace industries, it was found that China has already achieved significant savings in production time, cost, and material on account of AM. 3D printed parts have been used in the COMAC C919 passenger jet and various military aircraft such as the Y-20 transport and J-15, J-16, J-20, and J-31 jet fighters.

Jin Dayuan from the No. 36 Research Institute of China Electronics Technology Group Corporation (CETC) contends that 3D printing will not replace traditional form of manufacturing, rather it will complement. Specifically citing American advances in 3D printing, which is common throughout Chinese sources, Jin holds up American efforts to 3D print parts for the F-35 fighter and SpaceX's Dragon 2 space capsule as examples. Jin also sees additional opportunities in space-based manufacturing (太空制造), thereby reducing loads for launch and greater mission flexibility; production of “mini-unmanned aerial vehicles (微型无人) and parts (无人机暂用零件);” military electronics such as a 2013 production of a satellite antenna by Shenzhen Weihang Magnetolectric Co., Ltd.; and the production of parts for regular and emergency repairs and general maintenance. In line with Jin's last point, the repair of damaged military materiel is echoed by writers in Tactical Missile Technology, a PRC military journal. Referencing American Naval proposals, the same analysts assert 3D printers could be deployed on ships and act as “factories” for materiel, such as drones, which will save space and inventory overhead. Around the same time as that publication, the PLA-Navy unveiled that it had used 3D printers onboard its naval vessels.

3D printing has an important role to play in the PRC's strategic objective of becoming a science and technology superpower, with significant implications for both civilian industries and for PLA capabilities. Although analysts within the PRC are divided between those who perceive 3D printing to be a threat to traditional manufacturing industries, and those who consider it an indispensable part of the PRC's superior military capabilities, collaboration between the PRC central government and PLA science and technology commissions has nevertheless resulted in the increasing incorporation of 3D printing technology in military manufacturing. **End OE Watch Commentary (VornDick)** *(continued)*



Continued: An Instant PLA: Just Add 3D Printing

by Wilson VornDick

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“Through use of the on-board 3D printer, though, sailors were able to create the replacement part in mere hours, getting the Harbin up and running and back to maneuvers.”

Source: Sarah Anderson Goehrke, “China’s PLA Navy Deploys 3D Printers Onboard Warships to Replace Small Parts,” *3DPrint.com*, 8 January 2015. <https://3dprint.com/35981/china-pla-navy-3d-printing/>

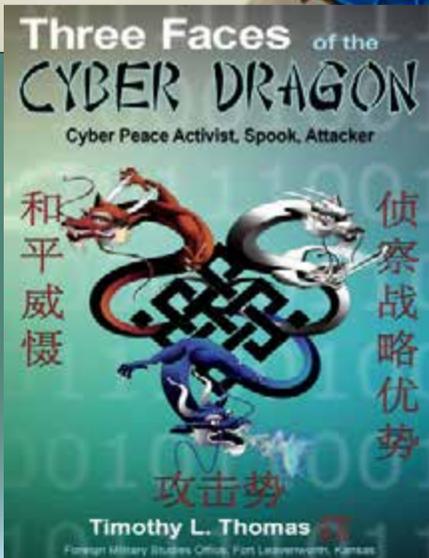
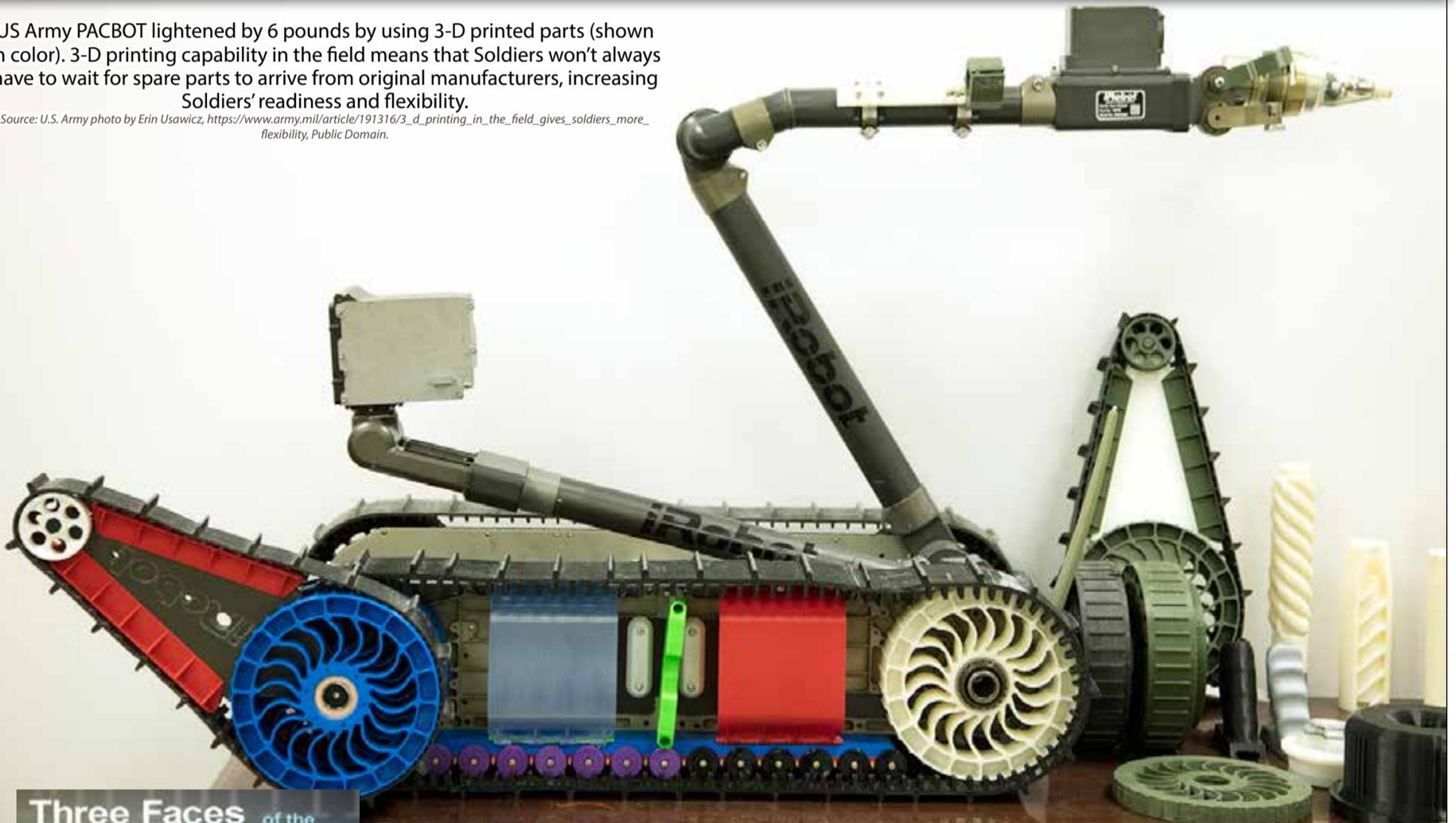
...We do know that China has been developing 3D printers since 2001, particularly for use in their military. The technology is utilized largely for prototyping, molding, repair of small parts, and weapons systems throughout the various branches of the country’s military...

Additionally, the J-15 carrier-based fighter jet used 3D printing to create new small parts to repair training flight damages...Today, we also learn that the People’s Liberation Army (PLA) Navy is utilizing 3D printers on their warships. The deployed 3D printers will be used to replace crucial small parts, and one destroyer has already taken advantage of the technology.

Last week, a wheel gear on the Harbin broke. The New Year’s Eve incident occurred in the Gulf of Aden, where the Harbin has been involved in counterpiracy maneuvers alongside the US Navy since mid-2013. The Harbin is a Type 052D destroyer; having the engine down in the far-off Arabian Sea, thousands of miles from parts suppliers in the ship’s home country, was a problem that required a fast solution...Through use of the on-board 3D printer, though, sailors were able to create the replacement part in mere hours, getting the Harbin up and running and back to maneuvers.

US Army PACBOT lightened by 6 pounds by using 3-D printed parts (shown in color). 3-D printing capability in the field means that Soldiers won’t always have to wait for spare parts to arrive from original manufacturers, increasing Soldiers’ readiness and flexibility.

Source: U.S. Army photo by Erin Usawicz, https://www.army.mil/article/191316/3_d_printing_in_the_field_gives_soldiers_more_flexibility, Public Domain.



China’s cyber policy appears to have three vectors —peace activist, espionage activist, and attack planner— that dominate China’s cyber policy. Some are always hidden from view while others are demonstrated daily. Three Faces of the Cyber Dragon is divided into sections that coincide with these vectors.

<https://community.apan.org/wg/tradoc-g2/fmso/m/fmso-books/195610/download>



New “Fast Food” to Replace Rations and Field Kitchen Meals in the PLA

OE Watch Commentary: The PLA is attempting to speed up, systematize and improve the quality of their food service for soldiers. As the PLA increases the regularity and degree of realism with which it trains, the way logistics support units feed the PLA is also having to adapt. The accompanying excerpted article outlines the steps that the Chinese military is taking to improve the speed with which food can be prepared while improving quality. The effort involved all Chinese services, the Central Military Commission’s Joint Staff, Political Work, Logistics Support, and Equipment Development Departments as well as five other organizations under the training administration department. A key consideration mentioned in the article is that every operational unit is expected to go out on exercises for at least seven contiguous days every year. Such demands make traditional ways of feeding soldiers in the field impractical. This is involving a cultural shift from traditional Chinese expectation that “four dishes and a soup” will be served at every meal to prepackaged, or less time-intensive dishes. This appears to be part of a broader discussion the PLA is having internally about the quality of its rations and food services, perhaps sparked by recent reports that soldiers were bringing their own food to field exercises.

Mirroring a broader effort to make better use of local companies to support PLA operations, units are being encouraged to work with catering companies to reduce cost, improve quality and strengthen military-civil fusion. Other avenues to streamline the logistics “tail” for military catering units are being explored. In June 2018, for example, an air force unit under the Central Theater Command experimented with delivering field equipment and food via UAV to a logistics support company. The article ends by mentioning that the updated guidelines for food service will be incorporated into the Outline of Military Training Evaluation (OMTE; 军事训练大纲). The PLA hopes to improve conditions at its bases and in the field, while reducing its logistics footprint and allowing more effective deployments and training. **End OE Watch Commentary (Wood)**



Chinese army flag.

Source: Created by PhilIP / using CorelDRAW X3 [Public domain], via Wikimedia Commons, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:People%27s_Liberation_Army_Flag_of_the_People%27s_Republic_of_China.svg.

Source: “全军野战饮食快餐化保障体系加快推进 (Accelerate Adoption of “Fast Food” Field Ration Support System Throughout the Whole Military),” *PLA Daily Journalist Department*, 9 November 2018. http://army.81.cn/content/2018-11/09/content_9339704.htm

Field food catering is an important part of combat power generation. In recent years, the Logistics Support Department of the Central Military Commission has resolutely implemented the spirit of CMC Chairman Xi Jinping’s series of important instructions regarding the battlefield rations and food services, and the systemic obstacles to the field catering training and the “four dishes and one soup” [according to Chinese culinary tradition most meals include four dishes (hot and cold) and soup]. The question of structural contradictions between soldiers’ traditional diet and new policy that are not supported by the standard of protection have fully promoted the overall transformation of the field food security.

When creating the “Fast Food” Field Ration Support System model, the approach must change depending on the operational conditions, support environments and force compositions to offer appropriate levels of service. Catering support will be contingent upon the unit mission requirements, at the individual, tactical and campaign levels.

Units will set requirements, and with the government providing a platform, and enterprises supporting through research, officers and soldiers will test idea of field rations, field catering equipment and equipment research, direct use of local high-quality scientific research force to carry out technical research, but also direct choice of local mature products and technology. Aiming at the forefront of international and domestic science and technology, actively develop and apply new materials, technology, new technologies, the introduction of a number of high-energy, light weight, small volume of field food and integrated, intelligent, fast field catering equipment.

“When creating the ‘Fast Food’ Field Ration Support System model, the approach must change depending on the operational conditions, support environments and force compositions to offer appropriate levels of service.”



Japan and India Relations: A Counterweight to China?

OE Watch Commentary: Chinese expansion into the South China Sea and Indian Ocean are reportedly prompting stronger military, economic, and trade ties between India and Japan. The accompanying four excerpted articles, published in *Nikkei Asian Review*, *Jansatta*, *Gujarat Samachar*, and *Japan Times* respectively, offer some insight into the situation.

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe have met with each other a dozen times since they have been in office. Three of the articles discuss the Asia-Africa Growth Corridor (AAGC), a growth strategy plan introduced jointly in 2016. In the \$40 billion plan, according to the *Gujarat Samachar* article, Japan wishes to invest \$30 billion and India \$10 billion. Some observers see AAGC as a competitor to China's Belt and Road Initiatives, which is a huge concern for India. It is worth noting that China is currently Africa's biggest economic partner.

According to the *Nikkei Asian Review* article, in recent years, the Indo-Japanese defense relationship has expanded quickly. For example, both countries have conducted three-way naval exercises with the United States in both the Indian Ocean and the Pacific. Both sides are also cooperating in the exchange of intelligence information, according to the *Jansatta* article. They have also agreed to work on the research and development of unmanned ground vehicles and robotics.

India and Japan have also begun formal negotiations over an acquisition and cross-servicing agreement, which would allow the Japan Self Defense Force and the Indian military to use each other's bases for logistical support. However, with Japan possibly allowing India to access its base in Djibouti and Japan gaining access to India's Andaman naval base, the *Nikkei Asian Review* article cautions that, while such logistics arrangements would be geared toward peacekeeping missions, "it may prompt a reaction from China – especially from elements who see such moves as attempts to encircle the country."

All four articles clearly point to India's strengthening relationship with Japan as a perceived strategy to counter China's growing power. However, according to the *Japan Times* article, Tokyo officially denies that Japan is trying to keep China's growing economic and military power in check through such strategy. Shinzo Abe seems to be walking a fine line. According to the last article, Abe, who recently returned from Beijing, where he "succeeded in significantly improving Japan's ties with Beijing by meeting... (Chinese President) Xi Jinping," continues to "pursue his apparent favored policy of strengthening Japan's ties with India as a counterweight to China's growing power in the region." **End OE Watch Commentary (Hurst)**

“After the Doklam dispute, continuous cooperation from Japan has become extremely important for India.”

Source: Kiran Sharma, “Modi-Abe Summit to Pave Way for Closer Security Cooperation,” *Nikkei Asian Review*, 26 October 2018. <https://asia.nikkei.com/Politics/International-Relations/Modi-Abe-summit-to-pave-way-for-closer-security-cooperation>

The two governments have already agreed to work on research and development of unmanned ground vehicles and robotics, and plan to continue discussions. Modi and Abe are likely to talk about a bilateral Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement, a military logistics pact that would allow access to each other's bases.

The Indo-Japanese defense relationship has expanded quickly in recent years. The countries conduct three-way naval exercises with the U.S. in the Indian Ocean and the Pacific.

Signing an ACSA would pave the way for their defense forces to share not only bases but also fuel, food, water and other supplies. Shamshad Ahmad Khan, a visiting associate fellow at the Institute of Chinese Studies, said the governments reached an understanding on signing such a pact when Japanese Defense Minister Itsunori Onodera visited India in August.

Khan said it is “likely that Japan will allow India access to its base in Djibouti and India in turn will allow access to Japan to its Andaman naval base.” But he warned that, although the logistics arrangement would be geared toward peacekeeping missions, it may prompt a reaction from China -- especially from elements who see such moves as attempts to encircle the country.

Source: “साझेदारी का सफर (Partnership Journey),” *Jansatta*, 30 October 2018. <https://www.jansatta.com/editorial/jansatta-editorial-journey-to-partnership-about-indo-japan-annual-summit/804868/>

After the Doklam dispute, continuous cooperation from Japan has become extremely important for India. Shinzo Abe has returned from China visit only last week. That's why this meeting between the leaders of India and Japan would also be helpful in understanding the stance of China. If the two countries talk to China together, it can be a more effective step. Then, if the two undertake strategic cooperation in the Asia-Pacific region, they can pose a challenge to China. Apart from this, with cooperation in the exchange of intelligence information, the security arrangement in this region will become more concrete. Japan has always been cooperating with India in the technology sector. It has been investing in several projects in the industrial sector.

(continued)



Continued: Japan and India Relations: A Counterweight to China?

Source: “ભારત અને જાપાનના સંબંધો નવી ઊંચાઈ તરફ અગ્રેસર (India and Japan’s Relationship Leading to New Heights),” *Gujarat Samachar*, 30 October 2018. <https://www.gujaratsamachar.com/news/news-focus/news-focus-30-october-2018>

After the Modi government came to power in 2014, there has been a significant improvement in the relations between India and Japan... Japan has been at the forefront in participating in the Make in India campaign launched by Prime Minister Modi. The Mumbai-Ahmadabad bullet train project worth \$15 billion is an important step under this campaign. However, even now, the project is facing a lot of challenges. Japan is ready to help eliminate the lack of capability in India which is a part of the economic strategy between the two countries. India and Japan together are working toward development of Asia-Africa Growth Corridor. On the other hand, the strategies of both countries are the same for the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue created for security of India-Pacific region. The two countries will also work for the development of infrastructural facilities in Bangladesh, Nepal, and Sri Lanka and in the energy sector. In reality, it is happening for the first time in the history of independent India that a country is ready to cooperate with India to save its reputation among its neighboring countries and South Asia, i.e. countries in the Indian Ocean region.

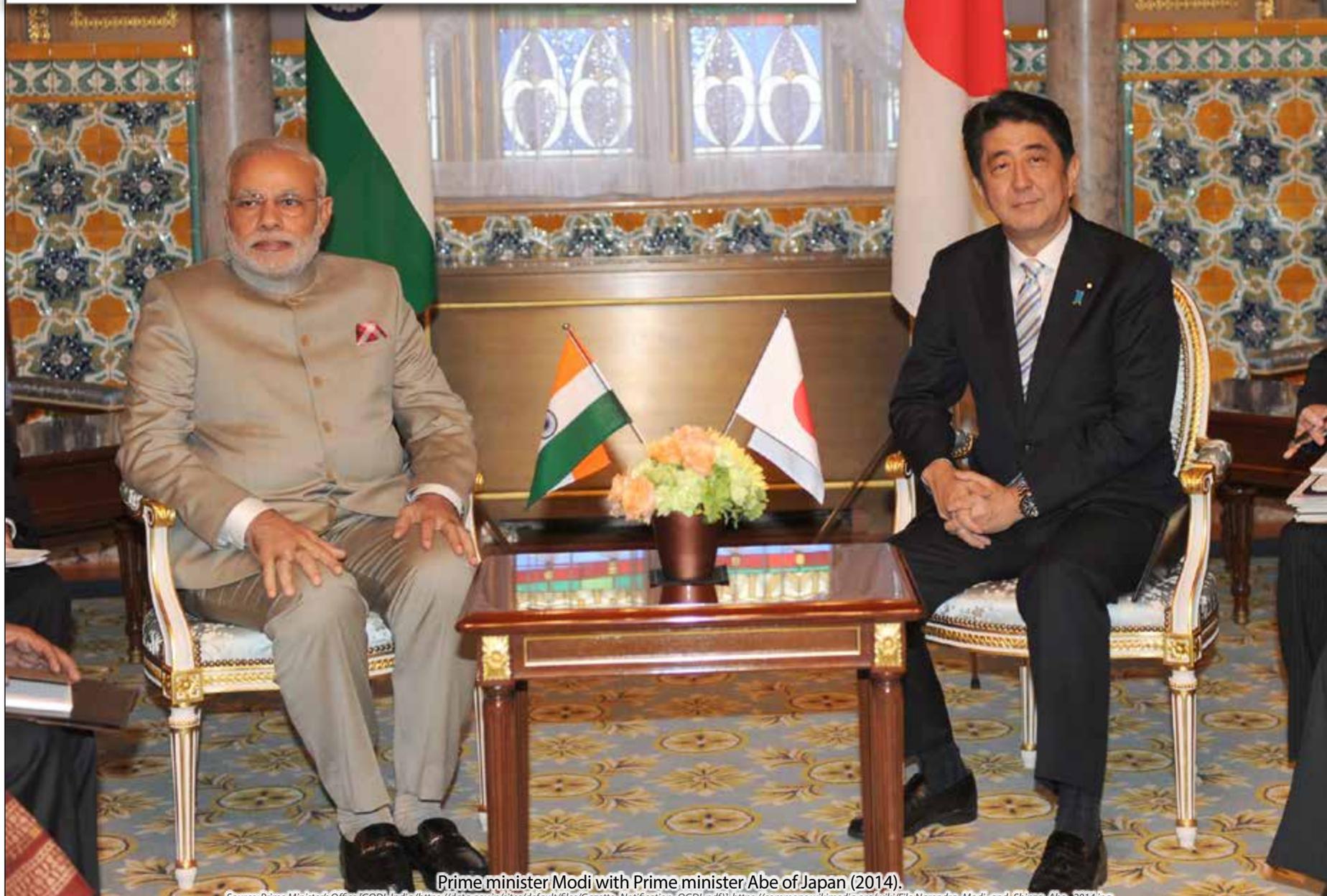
As such, friendly relations have existed between India and Japan since 1958 but the chain of events taking place in the Asia-Pacific region for the past few years has made these two countries natural partners. China is the greatest factor in bringing the two countries on the same platform. In reality, China, increasingly becoming a bully in the Asia zone, is dangerous for the two countries. China is increasing its movements in the South China Sea that is equivalent to danger for other Asian countries including Japan and Indonesia. So, the way China is increasing its intrusion in the Indian Ocean is also akin to a warning for India.

Source: Reiji Yoshida, “Modi and Abe Agree to Boost Ties as Tokyo Pledges Huge New Yen Loans for India,” *Japan Times*, 29 October 2018. <https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2018/10/29/national/politics-diplomacy/modi-abe-agree-boost-ties-tokyo-pledges-huge-new-yen-loans-india/#.W-x9EvZFzZs>

The concept is often seen as part of Japan’s effort to keep in check China’s growing economic and military power in the region, although Tokyo officially denies this.

Abe, who returned from Beijing on Saturday, has recently succeeded in significantly improving Japan’s ties with Beijing by meeting his Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping there.

Still, Abe has continued to pursue his apparent favored policy of strengthening Japan’s ties with India as a counterweight to China’s growing power in the region.



Prime minister Modi with Prime minister Abe of Japan (2014).

Source: Prime Minister’s Office [GODL-India (https://data.gov.in/sites/default/files/Gazette_Notification_OGDL.pdf)], https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Narendra_Modi_and_Shinzo_Abe,_2014.jpg.



The Impact of Pakistan-Russia Security Cooperation on India

OE Watch Commentary: Over the past few years the Russian government has increased its level of security cooperation with the government of Pakistan after lifting an embargo on selling weapons to it in 2014. While this caused some immediate issues with the Indian government, a major purchaser of Russian weapons and equipment, the impact it has had on Indian-Russian security cooperation is still playing out. The accompanying excerpted articles report on a couple of recent developments in Russia’s security cooperation with both South Asian states and they provide some measure of how this continues to take shape.

The article from *The News International* reports on the third iteration of the joint Russia-Pakistan exercise “Friendship,” which took place in northern Pakistan. The article notes how “70 troopers from Russia’s southern military district will participate in the drills” and that it comes only a couple of months after the two governments established the “Russia-Pakistan Joint Military Consultative Committee” and reached an agreement “allowing officers from the country’s armed forces to train in Russia.” It is worth remembering that a few years ago, Russian officials stated that they planned to hold the joint exercise only once, not as a series.



Russian and Pakistani servicemen train to eliminate a mock base during Friendship 2018.
Source: Russian Defense Ministry, <http://eng.mil.ru/en/multimedia/photo/gallery.htm?id=61487@cmsPhotoGallery>, CC 4.0.

The article from *The Economic Times* reports on a recent deal the Indian government made to purchase two frigates for “\$950 million.” The article on the agreement also notes how “two frigates of the Project 11356 class will be bought directly from Russia and a contract to build two more at an Indian yard is likely to be signed at a later stage” and that the frigates “are expected to be delivered by 2022.” As the Indian government watched Russian security cooperation with Pakistan increase, there were statements from Indian officials and predictions from regional analysts that this would push India to look for alternative sources of weapons and equipment. While the Indian government has been reducing some of the amount of money spent on procurement of Russian weapons and equipment over the past several years, the articles show that Russian security cooperation with Pakistan has been relatively small in scale and it has not, for the time being, caused the Indian government to completely end procurement from Russia. **End OE Watch Commentary (Stein)**

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“This is 3rd exercise as part of Pak-Russia bilateral training cooperation.”

Source: “Russian troops in Pakistan for joint military training,” *The News International*, 22 October 2018. <https://www.thenews.com.pk/latest/384062-russian-troops-in-pakistan-for-joint-military-training>

A Russian Army Contingent has arrived in Pakistan to participate in Pak-Russia Joint Training Exercise ‘Druzhba-III’, DG ISPR Maj Gen Asif Ghafoor said in a statement Monday.

“This is 3rd exercise as part of Pak-Russia bilateral training cooperation. The 1st Exercise was held in Pakistan during 2016, while 2nd in Russia during 2017, he further explained...

According to Vadim Astafyev, head of the press service of the Russian Southern Military District, the joint drills – Friendship 2018 – will be held at the training range in Pabbi town in Nowshera district. More than 70 troopers from Russia’s southern military district will participate in the drills...

In August, Pakistan and Russia reached a historic agreement allowing officers from the country’s armed forces to train in Russia. The deal was concluded at the end of the inaugural meeting of Russia-Pakistan Joint Military Consultative Committee in Rawalpindi...The talks between the two countries were headed by Defence Secretary Zamirul Hassan Shah and visiting Russian Deputy Defence Minister Col Gen Alexander Fomin.

Source: Pubby, Manu. “India inks \$950 million deal for Russian frigates,” *The Economic Times*, 29 October 2018. <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/india-inks-950-million-deal-for-russian-frigates/articleshow/66408319.cms>

Russia has inked a \$950 -million deal to supply two new warships to India that will be equipped with Brahmos missiles to add to the firepower of the Navy. The two frigates of the Project 11356 class will be bought directly from Russia and a contract to build two more at an Indian yard is likely to be signed at a later stage.

Sources told ET that while final clearances for the long-pending project came before the summit earlier this month between President Vladimir Putin and Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the deal was signed last week after price negotiations.

...The deal — under a ‘2+2’ scheme where technology will be transferred to an Indian shipyard to construct two of the frigates from scratch — has been in the works since 2015. The two ships to be brought from Russia are expected to be delivered by 2022...



Indonesia Seeks to Strengthen its Global Standing by Increasing Military Diplomacy

OE Watch Commentary: Hadi Tjahjanto, the Commander of Indonesia’s National Armed Forces (TNI), seems to have a new agenda in mind for the country’s military. According to the accompanying article excerpt, published in *ANTARA*, he is now looking to increase the country’s military diplomacy in order to “strengthen Indonesia’s position in the international world.” Hadi, who was appointed to the highest ranking position in TNI in April 2017, is pushing for increased military diplomacy because the “development of a threat spectrum” is becoming more complex. Bilateral and multilateral cooperation between countries is more suited to confront these threats “since no single country can face the threat by itself.” The article points out that by participating in bilateral and multilateral UN operations, such as peacekeeping, TNI will strengthen its position in the international arena and gain invaluable operational experience, therefore strengthening its capabilities.

End OE Watch Commentary (Hurst)

Source: Syaiful Hakim, “TNI tingkatkan diplomasi militer dukung diplomasi luar negeri (TNI Increases Military Diplomacy to Support foreign Diplomacy),” *ANTARA Online*, 5 November 2018. https://jateng.antaranews.com/nasional/berita/765135/tni-tingkatkan-diplomasi-militer-dukung-diplomasi-luar-negeri?utm_source=antaranews&utm_medium=nasional&utm_campaign=antaranews

The Indonesian National Armed Forces (TNI) Commander Air Chief Marshall Hadi Tjahjanto says that at the moment TNI is increasing its military diplomacy in order to support foreign diplomacy and strengthen Indonesia’s position in the international arena. “A strong military diplomacy is needed in order to support foreign policy and strengthen Indonesia’s position in the international world,” said the TNI commander in a message when presiding over a welcome ceremony for the TNI Maritime Task Force (MTF), Garuda Contingent (Konga) XXVIII-J UNIFIL, at the Military Sea-Cross Command Dock in Tanjung Priok, North Utara, on Monday.

In addition, the development of a threat spectrum is also getting more complex. This demands bilateral and multilateral cooperation since no single country can face the threat by itself.

“This duty as TNI diplomats not only gives the country a good name, but also provides individual experience. What the soldiers have carried out and the insights they have gained from the assignment field have to be used to improve the units’ professionalism and ensure the success of the next mission,” he said.



“...the development of a threat spectrum is also getting more complex. This demands bilateral and multilateral cooperation since no single country can face the threat by itself.”

Indonesian soldiers participate in a mass casualty training scenario as part of exercise Cooperation Afloat Readiness and Training (CARAT) (2013).

Source: MCI Joshua T. Rodriguez [Public domain], via Wikimedia Commons, [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Indonesian_sailors_participate_in_a_mass_casualty_training_scenario_as_part_of_exercise_Cooperation_Afloat_Readiness_and_Training_\(CARAT\)_Indonesia_2013_in_Jakarta,_Indonesia,_May_24,_2013_130524-N-NX489-076.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Indonesian_sailors_participate_in_a_mass_casualty_training_scenario_as_part_of_exercise_Cooperation_Afloat_Readiness_and_Training_(CARAT)_Indonesia_2013_in_Jakarta,_Indonesia,_May_24,_2013_130524-N-NX489-076.jpg).



Malaysia Arrests Group of Foreign Salafi-Jihadis

OE Watch Commentary: On 6 October the Malaysian-language website *Berita Harian* published the accompanying excerpted article about the arrest of eight men in three parts of Malaysia: Perlis, Kuala Lumpur, and Johor. According to the article, they all had studied at an Islamic center in Perlis, which is the smallest and northernmost province of Malaysia and borders Thailand. There were also transnational elements to this group. They had desired to set up an Islamic center, which would have been based on the model of a madrassa in Yemen, which is led by Salafi-Jihadi extremist ideologues.

At least one of the arrested individuals had a relative who was connected to the madrassa in Yemen and had undergone firearms training. Of the eight individuals arrested, five were from a European country and one was from a country in the Americas (Malaysian officials did not specify the countries in the article). The Malaysian authorities also noted they could not have carried out these arrests if not for cooperation with foreign intelligence agencies.

The Malaysia intelligence officials interviewed for the article stated that the ideology of the group was opposed to democracy or any mixing of the sexes or secular teaching at any private or public institution. The group also declared that anyone who did not hold their beliefs was an apostate. According to the Inspector-General of Police, this was not the first time the foreign Salafi-Jihadi ideology has been spread in Malaysia to recruit and operationalize new members: the same ideology had been a catalyst for the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS), al-Qaeda, Jemaah Islamiyah, and Abu Sayyaf attacks in Southeast Asia. As a result, Malaysia was unwilling to take any chances with this group and arrested them before they could carry out any attacks in furtherance of their ideology. **End OE Watch Commentary (Zenn)**

Source: “8 individu terbabit kumpulan ekstremis ditahan (8 individuals involved in extremist groups were arrested),” *Berita Harian*, 6 October 2018. <https://www.bharian.com.my/berita/kes/2018/10/482442/8-individu-terbabit-kumpulan-ekstremis-ditahan>

A total of eight men, including seven foreign nationals, were involved in an extremist group’s activities in the country. Inspector-General of Police, Tan Sri Mohamad Fuzi Harun, said all suspects had a relationship with an Islamic study center in Perlis either as a student, a former instructor or a former student. “The arrest was made following intelligence information obtained by the police in connection with the efforts of a terrorist group that adhered to the ideology of Salafi Jihadi in Yemen to set up an Islamic learning center in Southeast Asia to spread the ideology.”

The result of intelligence information obtained from foreign intelligence agencies revealed that the six suspects had links with the Daesh terrorist group or other extremist groups in their home countries. The preliminary findings on detained suspects revealed that they rejected the democratic system and had adopted extreme ideals such as men and women being banned from wearing pants. They also claim that secular studies in public and private institutions of higher learning are illegal.

Mohamad Fuzi said the arrest by the Counter Terrorism, Special Branch, PDRM Division was to curb the spread of ideology of Salafi Jihadi which was the catalyst for violent acts of groups such as Islamic 4 State, Al-Qaeda, Jemaah Islamiah, Abu Sayyaf Group, others. “This is not the first time foreign Salafi Jihadi elements have used Malaysia as a base to spread the ideology of Salafi Jihadi and recruit new members,” he said.

“This is not the first time foreign Salafi Jihadi elements have used Malaysia as a base to spread the ideology of Salafi Jihadi and recruit new members.”



Perodua Kembara Polis.

Source: Perodua Kembara Polis, CC 3.0, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Perodua_Kembara_Polis.JPG



The Philippines Military Commemorates Marawi Battle

OE Watch Commentary: Just over one year ago, the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) won a decisive months-long battle against Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS)-loyal militants in Marawi. One year later, on 18 October, the accompanying excerpted article from *The Philippine Star* discussed the country’s commemoration of that battle. Quoting government officials, the article notes that millions of dollars are being devoted to the rebuilding of Marawi. However, at the same time, the article seemed to question the government’s commitment to the city, highlighting that President Rodrigo Duterte skipped the commemoration and his spokesmen would not state where he was that day.

The AFP Chief General spoke at the event, declaring that the country stood united to defeat the evils of terrorism and that the military killed the leaders of the ISIS-loyal Marawi rebels. Nevertheless, the article also emphasized the high price exacted in the battle for Marawi. Over one year later, the article described how the city still bore the scars from aerial bombardments and fighting on the ground. Moreover, despite the military victory, Marawi remains under martial law, which means the population still feels the effects of the battle. It is unknown when martial law will end.

The article also seemed to indicate a disconnect between the AFP’s rhetoric and the reality on the ground. While the AFP promises to remain vigilant to prevent terrorists from infiltrating Marawi again and asserts an attitude of bravado, the article remained focused on the displaced of Marawi. For them, the victory against the ISIS-loyal militants has not brought back their livelihoods. The article reminds the reader that hundreds of thousands of the city’s residents are still displaced and they cannot return to their homes. The government claims it has the right to restrict movement into the city because it has not concluded bomb-clearing operations. Therefore, for many civilians, their battles are still ongoing. **End OE Watch Commentary (Zenn)**

“Despite the government’s promise of massive reconstruction and rehabilitation of the devastated city, hundreds of displaced families are still staying at various evacuation camps.”

Source: “Liberation of Marawi City remembered,” *The Philippine Star*, 18 October 2018. <https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2018/10/18/1861019/liberation-marawi-city-remembered>

A year after its liberation from Islamic State (IS)-linked militants, Marawi City is inching its way to total recovery and freedom from terrorism and violence, with P20 billion earmarked to help its citizens rebuild their homes and livelihood. Presidential spokesman Salvador Panelo said from Davao City, “As we celebrate the triumphs of our government troops against the Daesh-inspired Maute rebels, we pay tribute to those who have fallen in the fierce battles during the siege of Marawi and gave the ultimate sacrifice to make our nation safer and more secure,” he said. He was mum on the whereabouts of President Duterte, who skipped the anniversary rites attended by Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) chief Gen. Carlito Galvez and other ranking officials. He also lauded the military’s action that led to the death of suspected terror leaders Omar Maute and Isnilon Hapilon.

Scars of months-long fighting were still visible in most parts of the country’s only Islamic city. The government’s military action – including aerial bombing and massive infantry attack – had thwarted the establishment of an Islamic caliphate in the area and staved off the possibility of violence spreading to other parts of the country, Duterte’s spokesman said.

But despite the government’s promise of massive reconstruction and rehabilitation of the devastated city, hundreds of displaced families are still staying at various evacuation camps. The military said it has to restrict the movement of civilians in the city as troopers have yet to complete their bomb clearing operations, especially at ground zero.



Local officials of Lanao del Sur province visits the Ground Zero (also known as the Main Battle Area) in Marawi for the first time since the end of the Battle of Marawi (2017).

Source: Marawi Ground Zero, public domain, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Marawi_Ground_Zero.jpg



Counterterrorism Vulnerabilities in Western Australia

OE Watch Commentary: Australia has suffered relatively few terrorist attacks in recent years, as the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS)-connected attacks in the country have mostly been inspired by ISIS, not directed. They have also tended to be small-scale and often failed attempts by novices. Nevertheless, according to the accompanying excerpted article from the *Australian Broadcasting Corporation*, authorities in Western Australia have not done enough to ensure the public's safety from potential terrorist attacks.

The lack of preparedness of the authorities was detailed in a new report by a parliamentary committee called The Community Development and Justice Standing Committee. One problem discussed in the report is that security guards working at various events often do not receive any training to prepare for terrorist attacks. However, they are often inevitably the first responders to attacks. In addition, police often do not provide security advice to organizations before they hold events in crowded places. While security at larger events, such as soccer matches, tend to be adequate, the report noted that smaller ad hoc events were more susceptible to terrorism because they are soft targets.

Another issue is that unlicensed contractors can often gain access to sensitive locations. The report found one unlicensed contractor, for example, was working in a police station in Perth. In response to the report, the Premier of Western Australia, Mark McGowan, stated that Western Australia is vast and police could not be everywhere at once. He also expressed confidence that the leadership of the police would do all it could to prepare for all eventualities. While the report exposed some gaps in counterterrorism in Western Australia, the overall reaction to the report in Australia appeared to be positive and it is believed that it could lead to improved preparedness for terrorist attacks. **End OE Watch Commentary (Zenn)**

“The report found both local government and the security industry were neither adequately resourced to deal with terrorist threats nor adequately trained.”

Source: “WA Police not doing enough to protect public from terrorism, report finds,” *Australian Broadcasting Corporation*, 18 October 2018. <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-10-18/wa-police-not-doing-enough-to-protect-public-from-terrorism/10393560>

Authorities are not doing enough to protect West Australians from terrorist attacks, and a lack of coordination among agencies and inadequate resources are not helping, a parliamentary committee has found. The Community Development and Justice Standing Committee's initial report into the state's preparedness for a terrorist incident found police were reluctant to provide counter-terrorism security advice for private organisations holding events in crowded places.

While the management of major venues such as Perth Arena and Perth Stadium were willing to strengthen their venues and fulfill their duty of care, the report found their efforts were being undermined by the attitude of police. Although the community and national bodies like the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation (ASIO) are saying that the Western Australian Police need to be more proactive and provide more advice to owners and operators of crowded places, the Western Australian Police are seemingly reluctant to engage in that space.

The report found both local government and the security industry were neither adequately resourced to deal with terrorist threats nor adequately trained. While security and major public events was generally adequate, smaller or ad hoc events and those held in regional areas were more susceptible to terrorism. In one case uncovered by the committee, an unlicensed security contractor was found to be undertaking work inside the armoury of a Perth police station.

Premier Mark McGowan said police and the State Government did all they could to protect Western Australians from the threat of terrorism.



Perth Stadium in December 2017.

Source: Samuel Wiki [CC0], from Wikimedia Commons, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Perth_Stadium,_December_2017_01.jpg.

Russia Cultivates Libyan Ties

OE Watch Commentary: Since the overthrow of Muammar Gaddafi in 2011, and in particular over the past few years, Russia has gained influence in Libya by cultivating ties with key players involved in the ongoing struggle for power. According to the accompanying Arabic-language media excerpts, the Kremlin has become an essential ally to Khalifa Haftar, the leader of the Libyan National Army (LNA) based in the country's eastern half; it has also maintained warm relations with Haftar's rivals in the Tripoli-based Government of National Accord (GNA); and most recently, it has reached out to Gaddafi loyalists.

Khalifa Haftar commands Libya's strongest single fighting force and favors a military solution to the Libyan conflict. According to the first two accompanying articles, from the Qatari daily *al-Araby al-Jadid*, this now puts him at odds with his main regional backers (Egypt and the UAE), who over the past several months have sought a political solution by reaching out to Haftar's rivals, including "officers and soldiers from Misrata and in the 'Bunyan al Marsous' forces." Their goal is to establish "a military council that includes officers representing all political factions, including those loyal to the previous regime." Haftar, according to these reports, "does not want to share power in the military institution" and disagrees with the proposed contours of a negotiated settlement. If his relations with Egypt and the UAE were to deteriorate, Haftar would be forced to rely on Russia, "which deals with him according to its own interests and has not directly stated support for him."

A key area where Russia and Haftar are closely aligned involves weapons transfers: Libya remains under an international arms embargo which both want lifted. According to the editor of a Russian military magazine, "[Russia] may circumvent the embargo by providing Haftar with weapons in accordance with contracts signed in the Gaddafi era, that is before the embargo was put in place." Rumors that they have covertly begun doing so abound. Haftar's relationship with the Russian military was punctuated by a surprise visit to Moscow shortly before the Palermo Conference on Libya in early November 2018, where he was shown meeting with top Russian military leaders.

Egypt's overtures to anti-Haftar militias and political leaders in western Libya are in line with Russia's overall approach to the conflict. As noted in the third article, also from *al-Araby al-Jadid*, "Official Russian policy toward Libya is based on the principle of being on the same field with all key players, in order to achieve a strategic objective." On the heels of the Palermo conference, the Kremlin's key operative in Libya, Lev Dengov, announced that Moscow is courting Muammar Gaddafi's son, Saif al-Islam Gaddafi. Although Saif al-Islam is currently barred from participating in politics, Dengov believes that he could appoint a representative and should be involved in the process, since he has "political weight and importance in the country" and would represent "a specific group of people that support all that is related to Gaddafi and his family." **End OE Watch Commentary (Winter)**



Sergei Shoigu meeting with Khalifa Haftar, Commander of the Libyan National Army (2017).
Source: Russian Defense Ministry, http://eng.mil.ru/en/news_page/country/more.htm?id=12137732@egNews, CC 4.0.

(continued)



Continued: Russia Cultivates Libyan Ties

“...Official Russian policy toward Libya is based on the principle of being on the same field with all key players...”

Source:

Osama Ali. “Details on New Egyptian Proposal to Unify Libyan Army,” *al-Araby al-Jadid*, 14 October 2018. <https://goo.gl/kKJE2a>

تفاصيل مقترح مصري جديد لتوحيد مؤسسة الجيش في ليبيا

According to the anonymous source, the new proposal rests on creating a military council that includes officers representing all political factions, including those loyal to the previous regime. Haftar would be the council president without having absolute power, as the proposal calls for the military decisions to be taken by consensus... Last March, Egyptian sources in the presidential commission on Libyan affairs disclosed details on an Egyptian-Emirati proposal to unify political and military leadership in Libya... Mohhi al-Din Zakariya, a Libyan security specialist, said that “Egypt is growing closer to all parties in the country. The Cairo meetings allow it to become closer not just to the Sarraj government but also to officers and soldiers from Misrata and in the ‘Bunyan al Marsous’ forces.”

Source: حفتز منزعج من تراجع دعم حلفائه ويلوح بتهديد الأمن المصري
Osama Ali. “Haftar Bothered by Declining Support from Allies, Hints at Threatening Egyptian Security,” *al-Araby al-Jadid*, 10 November 2018. <https://goo.gl/veP4Uk>

Source: هل تعزز روسيا وجودها العسكري في ليبيا؟
Rami al-Qaliouni. “Is Russia Strengthening its Military Presence in Libya?” *al-Araby al-Jadid*, 12 October 2018. <https://goo.gl/HGzUfa>

Source: تواصل روسي مع نجل القذافي يثير ردود فعل ليبية متباينة
Jamal Jawhar. “Russian Communications with Gaddafi’s Son Elicits Diverse Reactions in Libya,” *al-Sharq al-Awsat*, 15 November 2018. <https://goo.gl/CucPDS>

... Haftar “began realizing that his regional and global allies do not want to eliminate him nor do they want to support his wishes to resolve the Libyan issue militarily. Haftar does not want to share power in the military institution, and his backers do not appear to support this position” ... “Haftar’s only remaining supporter is Moscow, which deals with him according to its own interests and has not directly stated support for him. He knows well that his former allies, such as the UAE, are no longer excited about him and prefer silence toward recent political events. Cairo wants to keep Haftar to protect its security interests along the border, but it does not see opposing the Government of National Accord (GNA) as being in its interests but rather seeks to negotiate with it and to convince Haftar to agree to become part of a military institution under his leadership but under the control of the GNA. Haftar has recently begun seeking a way out, including by opening communication with the African Union through a message conveyed by a military delegation last week, asking its president for support. He then resorted to Russia, in order to ease the brunt of the results of the upcoming Palermo Conference on his situation.”

Over the past two years, Russia has sought to establish intensive communications with Libya’s various factions, seeking to regain the massive contracts it lost with the fall of Muammar Gaddafi in 2011. This is shown by the repeated visits made by both Haftar and the head of the government of national accord (GNA) Fayez al-Sarraj to Moscow, which seeks to mediate between the two. [Political Science Professor Gregory] Lukyanov explained that “Official Russian policy toward Libya is based on the principle of being on the same field with all key players, in order to achieve a strategic objective and reinstate political and economic channels to an acceptable level, in a way that benefits both parties on the medium and long term” ... Despite Haftar’s desire to obtain weapons from Russia, Moscow until now does not wish to violate the global embargo on weapons exports to Libya, at least openly. Andrey Frolov, the editor in chief of the magazine “Weapons Exports,” believes that Russia “may circumvent the embargo by providing Haftar with weapons in accordance with contracts signed in the Gaddafi era, that is before the embargo was put in place.”

The head of the Russian contact group for resolving the Libyan crisis, Lev Dengov, disclosed the existence of communications between his country and Saif al-Islam Gaddafi. He characterized Gaddafi as “having political weight and importance in the country, therefore he will be among the parties participating in the Libyan political process.” Dengov added, speaking to Russia’s Sputnik news agency the day before yesterday, “Saif al-Islam is extremely positive, and we may say he will be one of the parties to a political settlement for a simple reason, namely there is a specific group of people that support all that is related to Gaddafi and his family.” He added that “Saif al-Islam is very optimistic. He has a team that supports him. We should not forget, though, that there are sanctions against him and even if they are lifted, I don’t think his participation will be legitimate, since the elections will take place under UN auspices... I believe that in any case Saif al-Islam will need to name a candidate to represent him and the interests of the tribes, including the Qadhadhfa. Russia will never support someone whom the Libyan people do not support.”



Moving Forward on Turkish Acquisition of Russian S-400s

OE Watch Commentary: Turkey signed a \$2.5 billion agreement with Russia in December 2017 to purchase the S-400 anti-aircraft missile system and remains committed to it, despite the concerns of its NATO allies. The accompanying passages, one from the Turkish state owned *Anadolu Ajansı* and the other from English-language daily *Hurriyet Daily News*, provide information regarding why Turkey is moving ahead with the purchase, the steps it is taking to incorporate this system into its defense capabilities and the possible implication on Turkey as a NATO member.

The first passage from *Anadolu Ajansı*, quotes Turkish Minister of Defense Hulusi Akar stating, the S-400 purchase “was not a matter of choice for us, but necessity.” Turkey plans to complete the installation of the S-400 by October 2019 and is in the process of selecting the personnel to send to Russia for training at the beginning of 2019. Akar did not reveal any details regarding where the air-defense system will be deployed. Additionally, Akar claimed that this system will not interfere with NATO and that the concerns of their allies were irrelevant.

The second article from *Hurriyet Daily News* notes that while Turkey strengthens NATO militarily, Russia has made efforts to exploit the problems Turkey has had with its allies. The article quotes the former secretary general Rasmussen saying, “Russia is posing a threat to NATO, not just militarily, but also in terms of hybrid warfare and disinformation campaigns.” Regardless, it appears that the Turkish government is moving forward with the purchase of the S-400. **End OE Watch Commentary (Gunduz)**

“No doubt Russia will exploit signs of a split in our alliance and will make offers you cannot refuse.”

Source: Merve Yıldızalp. “S-400’lerin kurulum çalışmalarına Ekim 2019’da başlanacak” (The installation of S-400s will begin in October 2019), *Anadolu Ajansı*, 25 October 2018. <https://www.aa.com.tr/tr/bilim-teknoloji/s-400lerin-kurulum-calismalarina-ekim-2019da-baslanacak/1292537>

Minister of Defense Hulusi Akar said “the installation of the S-400 missile defense system will begin in October 2019.”...

Akar highlighted that the S-400 is a matter of defense and pointed out that there are serious aerial and missile threats against Turkey and the Turkish population.

“Currently, we are in process of selecting personnel. The selected personnel will be sent for training in Russia starting in the beginning of 2019,” Akar said. “They will get the necessary training there and then they will come back for duty...”

Akar noted that the location where the system will be placed is still in progress. [Turkish] Air Forces Command is working to assess the aerial and missile threats. The decision of where the [S-400] systems will be placed is going to be made according to the assessment results.

...Saying that the anti-aircraft missile system will be used independently from NATO systems, Akar said: “We find U.S. and NATO concerns irrelevant. We never allow any interference in U.S. or NATO systems. This was not a matter of choice for us, but necessity ...”

Akar said that Turkey wants to also be a producer, not just a buyer, of these systems, stressing that it will continue working on projects that incorporate Turkish collaboration in production.

Source: Barçın Yinanç. “Turkey will marginalize itself in NATO with the S-400s purchase,” *hurriyetdailynews.com*, 25 October 2018. <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/opinion/barcin-yinanc/turkey-will-marginalize-itself-in-nato-with-the-s-400s-purchase-138243>

Turkey is... [a]NATO member enjoying good relations and intensive cooperation on both bilateral and regional issues with Moscow...

Yet, despite being in the same alliance, Turkey has experienced severe strains with some NATO countries, especially with the United States. Russia has not missed the opportunity to exploit these rifts to widen the gap among alliance members.

Looking from that perspective, Turkey stands as a member that strengthens NATO militarily, but weakens it politically.

Following the panel, I approached Rasmussen to ask him about his views on Turkey... “Russia poses a threat to NATO, not just militarily, but also in terms of hybrid warfare and disinformation campaigns,” he said.

Then he went on to say, “Obviously, we have some internal challenges like Turkey...”

“...we are of course concerned about Turkey’s purchase of Russian military equipment that is not compatible with NATO equipment. The risk is of course that gradually Turkey will marginalize itself security wise within NATO. It will marginalize itself not by NATO’s decision but by its own decision,” said Rasmussen.

He said he agreed that Turkey was fulfilling its military commitments to NATO, however, the government decision to purchase S-400s is not just posing a political challenge but a strategic challenge, according to the former secretary general.

“No doubt Russia will exploit signs of a split in our alliance and will make offers you cannot refuse,” he said.

“My conclusion is we should keep Turkey as a full-fledged member and we should step up our dialogue with the government in Ankara,” said Rasmussen.



Equipping the IRGC with New Ballistic Missiles

OE Watch Commentary: Since the Iranian navy's defeat in Operation Praying Mantis in 1988, it has shied away from direct confrontation between its large ships and the US navy and instead embraced asymmetric swarming tactics with small speed boats. According to the accompanying excerpted report from the *Tasnim News Agency*, an outlet affiliated with the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), the IRGC has now developed anti-ship ballistic missiles with a range of 435 miles. While Iranian military and political leaders often exaggerate their capability, the Islamic Republic has invested significantly in its domestic military industries and has rolled out a number of other missiles, drones, and military platforms.

The commander of the IRGC Aerospace Force, General Amir Ali Hajizadeh, mentions in the article that Iran has "good capabilities and equipment in the fields of air defense more advanced than China, Russia, France, and England." While it has been noted that Iran has become a significant producer of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV), there are questions about its air defense capabilities. The likelihood that Iranian engineers have reverse-engineered equipment purchased from abroad has been noted, making Iranian missiles in the Persian Gulf a growing threat.

Within Iranian rhetoric, up to and including that of Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei, a constant theme is that Iran as a littoral state has more of a right to operate in the Persian Gulf than outside powers like the United States. Often, Khamenei refers to "the iron fist under a velvet glove" to argue that US diplomacy is insincere so long as the its navy remains in the Persian Gulf and transits the Strait of Hormuz, which contradicts the sanctity of international waters. That Iran is building up its anti-ship capabilities, if real, suggests that a doctrinal shift is underway in Iran.

End OE Watch Commentary (Rubin)



"We can target ships 435 miles away."

Iran testing its new anti-ship missile.

Source: Tasnim News, goo.gl/ZoD8ju, CC 4.0.

Source: "Tajhiz Sepah beh Mushak-e Balistik daryaye ba barad 700 kilometer (Equipping the IRGC with a surface-to-sea ballistic missiles with a 435 mile range)," *Tasnim News Agency*, 16 October 2018. www.tasnimnews.com/fa/news/1397/07/24/1854036

According to the defense correspondent of the Tasnim News Agency, at the sixth meeting of political officers of the Armed Forces based in both Tehran and Alburz provinces and held by the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC)'s Aerospace Force, Gen. Amir Ali Hajizadeh, commander of this Force, during the ceremony described the capabilities and achievements, both offensive and defensive, of the IRGC's Aerospace Force.

In this ceremony, he described the capabilities and achievements of the offensive and the defense of the aerospace force of the IRGC. According to a Sobh-e Sadegh report, at the beginning of the meeting, Gen. Amir Ali Hajizadeh pointed out the three basic pillars to the administration of the country: The Supreme Leader, people, and officials....

He stressed, "The world is witnessing that Iran ranks first in the region and seventh or eighth in the world and is ahead of the [North] Koreans in the missile field. We are also in the top 15 countries in the world in terms of unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) production more advanced than China and Russia, and we have good capabilities and equipment in the fields of air defense more advanced than China, Russia, France, and England.

General Amir Ali Hajizadeh pointed out that in 2007, the Supreme Leader ordered the commander at the time [and said], "I do not know if a ballistic missile from land will hit a ship or not, and if you can do this, it is great work." We followed from that, and we have empowered our children and today we have succeeded. The coastal missiles are ballistic rather than cruise, and this is itself sophisticated technology. We have produced [these] and can target ships 700 kilometers [435 miles] away."

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Turkey to Mass Produce Altay Tank

OE Watch Commentary: On 9 November 2018 the Presidency of Defense Industries of Turkey (SSB in its Turkish acronym) signed a deal with Turkish defense contractor BMC to mass produce 250 Altay main battle tanks. The Altay tank is believed to be an improved version of South Korea's K2 Black Panther tank. The accompanying passage from the state-owned *Anadolu Ajansı* provides information about the agreement for the production of Altay tanks.

According to the passage, in the initial phase, 250 Altay tanks will be manufactured and the Turkish Land Forces Command will receive the delivery of the first tank within 18 months. The Turkish and Qatari joint venture BMC will manufacture the tank, with additional involvement of Turkish firms Roketsan, Aselsan, MKE and Havelsan. BMC's CEO Ethem Sancak, during the signing ceremony, stated that SSB and the Turkish armed forces requested to manufacture the Altay tanks 100 percent locally. However, despite this request, the Turkish defense industry is still unable to produce a Turkish-made engine. The president of SSB Ismail Demir, stated that the engine will be foreign at this stage while locally made engines are being developed. German MTU engines will probably be used as the prototypes were produced using this engine.

The first 40 tanks are projected to be relatively basic in design and will carry the Akkor active protection system and some additional armor. The other 210 tanks will have a more advanced armor system and the capability to launch laser-guided projectiles from their 120-mm main gun. They will also have electronic command and control systems. Designing an unmanned Altay tank was also in the contract. Turkey's long-awaited Altay tank's mass production will certainly play a significant role in local armored vehicle production and will be an important contribution to the Turkish defense industry. **End OE Watch Commentary (Gunduz)**

“The contract for the mass production of (Turkish) Altay tank was signed in a ceremony at the state Defense Industries Presidency (SSB).”

Source: Necati Keleş, “Altay tankının seri üretim sözleşmesi imzalandı (Contract signed for the mass production of Altay tank),” *Anadolu Ajansı*, 9 November 2018. <https://www.aa.com.tr/tr/gunun-basliklari/altay-tankinin-seri-uretim-sozlesmesi-imzalandi/1306982>

The contract for the mass production of Altay tank was signed in a ceremony at the state Defense Industries Presidency (SSB)...

...The state Defense Industries President [Ismail] Demir, ... armored vehicle maker BMC's Chairman Ethem Sancak, Chairman of Aselsan Haluk Görgün, and General Manager of Roketsan Selçuk Yasar were present at the signing ceremony for the Altay [tank] mass production contract.

The project includes mass production of 250 Altay main battle tanks. The contract includes life-cycle logistical support and the establishment and operation of the Tank Systems Technology Center. The first Altay tank is projected to be delivered to Land Forces Command in 18 months. As part of the contract one unmanned Altay tank will also be designed, developed, and manufactured. Altay tanks have a 120-mm gun, electronic command and control systems, and armor...

Demir in a speech during the ceremony said the Altay tank is a milestone in the development of the Turkish defense industry.

Demir said foreign engines will be used in the first Altay tanks and in the future locally [made] engines will be used...

Regarding the engine of the tank, Demir said Turkey's main aim was to maximize the local production rate in such defense projects.

“We need to overcome obstacles that obstruct Turkey's ability to move independently. We are, of course, not closing the doors to foreign partners. Our doors remain open to any firms which want to cooperate with us...”



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Iranian Border Guard Post Overrun, Guards Abducted

OE Watch Commentary: The Islamic Republic of Iran has long faced low-level insurgency and insecurity in its Sistan and Baluchestan Province, which includes the entirety of Iran's border with Pakistan and several dozen miles of its frontier with Afghanistan. The region is both sparsely populated and dominated by extremely rough and inhospitable terrain. The local tension with the central government in Tehran is motivated not only by ethnicity—the Baluch are distinct from Persians, inhabit both sides of the Iran-Pakistan border, and have long harbored a nationalist movement—but they are also overwhelming Sunni and complain about sectarian discrimination from Iran's Shi'ite leadership. The accompanying excerpted article from the *Tasnim News Agency* highlights a 15 October 2018 incident in which insurgents overran the Mirjaveh border post, the main border crossing between Iran and Pakistan, and kidnapped several paramilitary Basijis and border police manning the crossing. The article suggests that there was collusion within the Iranian base, which enabled the seizure of the 12 Iranian servicemen. Jaish ul-Adl (Army of Justice), a Pakistan-based Salafi group, claimed responsibility. On 31 October, Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif traveled to Pakistan to urge resolution of the incident, which increasingly represents a thorn in relations between Iran and Pakistan.

Of interest in the article is the fact that Iran had deployed “indigenous” Basijis to staff the post, an indication that Iranian authorities seek to utilize ideological loyalists among local ethnicities to be the face of its security. That the same article shares the assessment that infiltrated agents helped conduct the operation from the inside, however, could suggest discord within the security forces about such a strategy and might signal a forthcoming decision to revert to staffing of years past, in which Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps units not native to Baluchistan were the first line of local security and defense. Lastly, the excerpted “reminder” that the terrorists had external support fulfills a common rhetorical theme blaming all local insecurity on the United States, Saudi Arabia, or both. **End OE Watch Commentary (Rubin)**

Source: “Rabudeh Shodan Ta’dadi az Basijian-e Bumi va Merzbanan dar Noqteh-e Sifr Marz (The Abduction of a Number of Indigenous Basijis and Border Guards from the Zero Point of the Border),” *Tasnim News Agency*, 16 October 2018. <https://www.tasnimnews.com/fa/news/1397/07/24/1854143>

According to a report by the defense correspondent of the Tasnim News Agency, citing a report from Sepah [Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corp] News: Last night [15 October], a number of indigenous Basijis and border forces who were at the Mirjaveh border post. They were kidnapped by the betrayal and collusion of agents or intruders of the counter-revolutionary groups. This announcement continued that the base had good fortifications, and reminded: The agents of terrorist groups are guided and supported by foreign [intelligence] services, and by deception and infiltrating agents, this incident took place at the zero marker of the border and in front of a Pakistani border guard station.

“The agents of terrorist groups are guided and supported by foreign [intelligence] services.”



The Iran-Pakistan Border.

Source: Wikimedia Commons, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Iran_-_Pakistan_border_-_panoramio.jpg, franek2, Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 3.0



Iranian Law Enforcement Forces Receive 12 UAVs

OE Watch Commentary: Within the Iranian context, the Law Enforcement Forces (LEF) are more than simply a police force, but rather often serve parallel domestic functions to the paramilitary Basij. In the accompanying excerpted article from the *Mehr News Agency*, Defense Minister Amir Hatami announced that the Ministry of Defense would increase the armaments and technologies available to the LEF for use in border control, surveillance, and combating smugglers. He specifically announced the transfer of 12 unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV), both the Mohajer and Sadeq models, to the LEF.

Alongside the Ababil, the Mohajer was the earliest indigenous Iranian UAV line. Iran developed the first prototype in 1985, and it was first used later that year. While Iranian forces used it mostly to take photos of Iraqi strongholds, it was also Iran's first weaponized UAV. When the Mohajer-4 was unveiled in September 2014, Iran's Deputy Defense Minister claimed that it could shoot down helicopters, fighter jets, and cruise missiles. The Mohajer-4, now built by the Qods Aviation Industries, reportedly has a 10 horsepower engine, a 6,500 foot flight ceiling, and a maximum speed of 75 miles per hour. It has become a mainstay of the regular army's ground forces. The Iranian government first unveiled the Sadeq in 2014 and claims the Sadeq can fly above the speed of sound and at a flight ceiling of 25,000 feet.

That the Iranian military more broadly, and the LEF specifically, are flying drones and utilizing them to conduct surveillance and security during the Arba'in religious festivities, when large numbers of Iranian pilgrims travel to Iraq, suggests their capabilities are to a large extent real and that they are becoming a normal tool in the Iranian security forces' toolbox. **End OE Watch Commentary (Rubin)**

“The Ministry of Defense will stand firm with the Law Enforcement Forces.”



Iran's Mohajer-6 drone on display.

Source: Tasnim News Agency, <https://newsmedia.tasnimnews.com/Tasnim/Uploaded/Image/1396/11/16/1396111614450867913235454.jpg>.

Source: “Anva-e Pehpad, Balgerd, va Tajhizat-e Entizami Shari beh NAJA Tahvil Dadeh Ast (Types of UAVs, Helicopters, and urban security equipment delivered to the LEF),” *Mehr News Agency*, 8 October 2018. <https://www.mehrnews.com/news/4424588>

According to a report from the public relations bureau of the Ministry of Defense, Gen. Amir Hatami [said]... The Ministry of Defense has always been prepared to engage seriously with the Law Enforcement Forces to equip the organization with the best defense and law enforcement products, and by divine power and through the wisdom and guidance of the Supreme Leader, and with the government's support for the dedicated and revolutionary experts and scientists of the Ministry of Defense and also the support of the armed forces and their reliance on indigenous knowledge, and despite all sanctions, they were able to tap the capabilities of knowledge-based companies, and optimize and deliver usable defense products to the Law Enforcement Forces based on the needs of this organization, and today we are witnessing the delivery of a small part of these products to the Law Enforcement Forces. Amir Hatami, referring to the fact that the Ministry of Defense will always stand alongside the Revolutionary Guards and the Law Enforcement Forces in establishing and developing national security, said, “Today... the Ministry of Defense will stand firm with the Law Enforcement Forces in the stability of national security.”

Amir Hatami added, “Thank God Almighty, at this ceremony and in the presence of my dear brother General Ashtari from the Iran Aviation Industries Organization of the Ministry of Defense, delivered 12 Mohajer and Sadeq UAVs, six helicopters, and new advanced communications equipment for special forces, that were manufactured by two organizations of the defense and electronic industries, and the beloved forces are provided such equipment so they can participate in promoting security and confronting dangerous phenomena that threaten the law and social security of the country.



Syria's MERV: Uptick in Anti-Kurdish Sentiment among Arabs

OE Watch Commentary: Recent news items from local media indicate that Arab residents of Syria's Middle Euphrates River Valley (MERV) are growing increasingly dissatisfied with life under the US-backed Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF). The SDF is dominated by Kurds but includes Arab units that help maintain a modicum of local support. One of these Arab units, the "Deir Ezzor Military Council," took heavy casualties in the October 2018 push to expel ISIS from its final Syrian holdout near the border with Iraq. As noted in the first accompanying excerpt from *al-Modon*, the council's leader blamed SDF leadership for the losses and resigned; fighters under his command went home, "accusing Kurdish SDF leaders of sending them into a bloodbath."

In early November, a prominent tribal leader from Raqqa named Bashir al-Huwaidi was assassinated by unknown gunmen. He had just left a meeting with SDF-allied local political leaders. ISIS took credit for the assassination, and the SDF was quick to concur that an ISIS cell was to blame. Local Arabic-language media sources, however, were unpersuaded and instead blamed the SDF. Leaders of several local tribes issued statements condemning the SDF, and according to the second accompanying passage, from *al-Araby al-Jadid*: "Tensions are at their highest, and the incident will not pass easily. A new stage has begun in the dealings with [the SDF], which behaves as an occupier with residents of the province."

Recent local media stories also accuse Kurdish SDF leaders of amassing power and wealth through the illicit drug trade. Although Syria is considered a narcotics transit country, the production, consumption and export of pharmaceutical psychostimulants and cannabis/hashish have increased markedly during the current conflict. In several areas under SDF control, including the border towns of Tel Abyad and Kobani, cannabis cultivation has become widespread. According to the third accompanying passage, "The growing of hashish (cannabis) is fully monopolized by militias of the Kurdish defense units (PYD)."

The Syrian government is not oblivious to the opportunities presented by Arab-Kurdish friction in the MERV. Back in March, as noted in the accompanying passage from *Arabi21*, it exploited widespread indigence and simmering anti-Kurdish sentiment in the area to recruit local Arabs into a loyalist militia. Since then, the economic fortunes of the Arab tribes have hardly improved, while anti-Kurdish sentiment is on the rise. Barring alternatives, the article muses, Arab tribal leaders may eventually fall back on the government for recourse. **End OE Watch Commentary (Winter)**

Source:

استقالات جماعية من مجلس ديرالزور العسكري
"Mass Resignations from the Deir Ezzor Military Council," *al-Modon*, 31 October 2018. <https://goo.gl/zSWRvn>

Following the advances made by ISIS to stop the "Defeating Terrorism" battle launched by the SDF in Hajin, rural Deir Ezzor, problems between SDF's Kurdish and Arab components were aggravated, according to al-Modon correspondent Nawras al-Arifi. The Arab component, represented by the Deir Ezzor Military Council, lost nearly 100 fighters in the recent battle and was not able to recover the bodies of tens of them, which ISIS burned and tortured. Tens of the Council's fighters were captured and tens others injured, amidst a situation of neglect and absence of needed medical services. This was preceded by a marginalizing of Arab leaders, giving Kurdish leaders the final word... As a result of the marginalization, the head of the Deir Ezzor Military Council, Ahmed Abou Khoula resigned from his position two weeks ago. The resignation was kept under wraps, in an attempt by the SDF to contain the situation until the end of the battle, which has gone differently than the SDF had hoped. On Tuesday news of the resignation was circulated, at the same time as many Council members put down their weapons, accusing Kurdish SDF leaders of sending them into a bloodbath...

Source:

تعطّل حملة قسد شرق الفرات... وتوتر متصاعد في الرقة
Amin al-Asi. "SDF Campaign East of the Euphrates Halts... As Tensions Grow in Raqqa," *al-Araby al-Jadid*. 4 November 2018. <https://goo.gl/RKvNr2>

Raqqa Province is experiencing major tensions after the assassination of a well-known tribal leader. Leaders in the Kurdish Units [SDF] controlling the province are being blamed for being behind this unprecedented attack... Despite the fact that ISIS took credit for the assassination of sheikh Bashir al-Huwaidi via its Amaq agency, local sources say that two leaders in the Kurdish forces are behind the attack, adding that the victim was opposed to Kurdish military presence in the Arab-majority area. The "Euphrates Post" network published a video recording of the moment the people expelled the head of the Raqqa Civilian Council, Layla Mustafa, members of the council from the SDF, and a SDF military leader named Luqman al-Saha, from sheikh al-Huwaidi's memorial service in the al-Mashlab neighborhood of Raqqa... The assassination is expected to have major repercussions. According to a local source, "Tensions are at their highest, and the incident will not pass easily. A new stage has begun in the dealings with this force, which behaves as an occupier with residents of the province."

Source:

الحشيش في الرقة: الجميع يتعاطى
Khalil Asaf. "Hashish in Raqqa: Everyone is Using it!" *al-Modon*, 13 October 2018. <https://goo.gl/sDi7KJ>

Selling, smoking and growing hashish and taking and selling Captagon pills have become widespread phenomena among the youth of Raqqa, whose city has gone from ISIS control to SDF control following a bloody and destructive battle... A former FSA fighter in Raqqa told al-Modon: "The growing of hashish (cannabis) is fully monopolized by militias of the Kurdish defense units (PYD). Most of it is grown in Ain al-Arab (Kobani) and Tal Abyad. The plants are hidden by planting them in the middle of corn fields. I saw Captagon pills for the first time in preparation for the Raqqa battle. The Arab units in the SDF received an allotment, since they were fighting at the front. I believe the Americans knew this"... In today's Raqqa, which has been exhausted by war and whose residents suffer from sickness due to polluted water mixed with city water, an adolescent may work selling water drawn from the river or gathering metal scraps from destroyed buildings, then spend the rest of the day smoking hashish, which holds the future of the region.

(continued)



Continued: Syria's MERV: Uptick in Anti-Kurdish Sentiment among Arabs

“... Tensions are at their highest, and the incident will not pass easily...”

Source:

Mustafa Mohammed. “The Regime Forms a Militia East of the Euphrates... What are its Goals and What About the SDF?” *Arabi21*, 6 March 2018. <https://goo.gl/nDkrVj>

النظام يشكل مليشيا شرق الرقة.. ما أهدافه وماذا عن “قسد”؟

A news source in eastern Raqqa disclosed that the Syrian regime is determined to form new militias in the area under the name of “Sanadid al-Jazeera Shield”... The “Raqqa is Being Slaughtered Silently” website said: “The new militia will be part of the Syrian regime’s 5th Legion, financed by Iran, and based in the village of Zur Shamar in rural eastern Raqqa. The source explained that the regime tasked Walid al-Shamari with leading this militia, which will work to “recruit people using money, taking advantage of the region’s extreme poverty.” In this regard, the deputy head of the opposition Raqqa Provincial Council, Mohammed Hijazi... [said] that the regime will exploit the marginalization of Arabs in Raqqa due to the SDF’s discriminatory policies, particularly toward tribal members. Hijazi said that the regime will benefit from the overwhelming anger of Raqqa’s people during the Kurdish militia’s occupation of their city, eventually leading them to fight without declaring war on the SDF or the United States. He believes the regime has a high chance of success in Raqqa, due to the fact that most residents oppose the SDF and its policies in Raqqa...



Fighters of the People’s Protection Units of the Syrian Democratic Forces on the bank of the Euphrates east of the city of Raqqa in northern Syria.

Source: Voice of America [Public domain], via Wikimedia Commons, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:YPG-SDF_fighters_near_the_Euphrates_east_of_Raqqa.png.

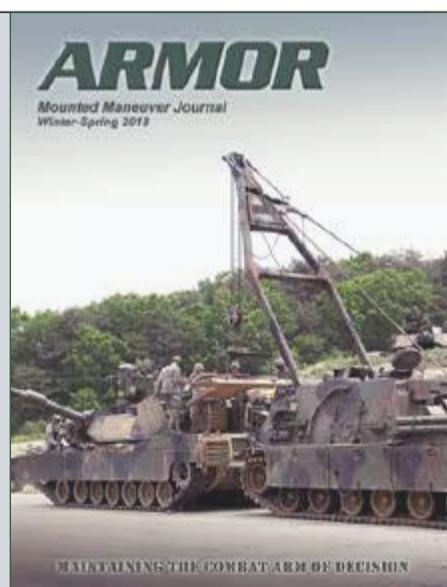
Reconnaissance-in-Force Russian Style

By Lester W. Grau

“Integrated fires, rapid detect-destroy systems and the controlled, merciless onslaught of smaller robot tanks and assault vehicles may rip through robust defenses to determine the true nature of the defense and prepare the main attack to totally dismantle it. To the Russian way of thinking, the reconnaissance-in-force remains a viable method of tactical intelligence. Learning how to employ it optimally is the current challenge.”

This paper was originally published in *Armor* journal’s Winter-Spring 2018 edition.

<https://community.apan.org/wg/tradoc-g2/fmso/m/fmso-monographs/230764>



PKK's Influence on Turkish-Iraqi Relations

OE Watch Commentary: Turkey and Iraq have historically had challenging issues to tackle. As the new government forms in Baghdad, the Turkish government seeks to insert its influence and build stronger relations with it. However, the presence of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) in Northern Iraq continues to impact Turkish-Iraqi relations as Turkey's main objective in Iraq is to fight the PKK with the support of the Iraqi government. The accompanying excerpted article from the pro-government think tank *Seta Foundation*, argues that the most pressing issue in Turkish-Iraqi relations is the PKK's presence in Iraq.

According to the author, while there are other policy issues on the table, the most pressing issue in Turkey's policy towards Iraq is the presence of terrorist organizations, especially the PKK in Iraq. The author further argues that the Iraqi central government's inability to control the areas bordering Turkey has led the PKK to form a strong presence, especially in northern Iraq. The PKK's presence in Iraq affects Turkey's relations with the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) as well, since Turkey blames the KRG for not cracking down on the PKK. Turkey expects the Iraqi central government to take measures to increase its border security to curb the PKK's cross-boundary movement. It has also tried to enhance its economic relations with an additional border gate to increase trade between both countries. While Turkish Foreign Minister Çavuşoğlu highlighted the cooperation between the two countries, he also made clear that Turkey will continue its cross-boundary operations into Iraq against the PKK despite Baghdad's concerns over violating its sovereignty. The Minister continued by saying that Turkey will fight terrorism regardless of its location and expects the support of the new government in Baghdad. **End OE Watch Commentary (Gunduz)**

Source: Kemal İnat, "Türkiye-Irak İlişkilerinde Terör Sorunu (Terrorism Problem in Turkish-Iraq Relations)," *Setav.org*, 13 October 2018. <https://www.setav.org/turkiye-irak-iliskilerinde-teror-sorunu/>

The main objective of Turkey's Iraq policy is to completely eradicate the existence of the PKK terror organization which continue to exist with the direct or indirect support of global and regional actors despite being labeled as a terrorist organization.

We can talk about three intertwined main issues as Turkey forms its Iraq policy. These can be categorized as clearing terrorist organizations from Iraq which pose a danger to Turkey's security, protecting Iraq's territorial integrity, and developing Turkish-Iraqi economic relations for mutual benefits.

The most important of these [issues] is to clear terrorist organizations out of Iraq. It is known that for decades Iraqi central government has had challenges exerting its authority over the areas bordering Turkey. As a result, the power vacuum in these areas has been filled by the terrorist organizations that stage attacks on and endanger the security of Turkey...

The power vacuum not only provided the opportunity for the legal Kurdish parties KDP [Kurdistan Democratic Party] and the PYD [Patriotic Union of Kurdistan] to establish an autonomous region, but also it allowed the PKK to increase its presence in Northern Iraq and move the headquarters of its terrorist attacks from Syria to Iraq... These [Kurdish] parties have refused to step up to end the existence of the PKK in the region.

[Turkish] Foreign Minister [Mevlüt] Çavuşoğlu gave a clear message during his visit to Iraq... to summarize: The system you are trying to establish in Iraq should not have a place for the PKK, otherwise Turkey will work to destabilize your system.



Kurdish PKK Guerillas (2016).

Source: Kurdishstruggle [CC BY 2.0 (https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0)], via Wikimedia Commons, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:PKK_female_fighter%CC%A002.jpg



Rising Tensions in the Eastern Mediterranean over Natural Gas

OE Watch Commentary: The maritime disputes in the Eastern Mediterranean over hydrocarbon reserves remain combustible as littoral states declared overlapping exclusive economic zones. The political situation in Cyprus adds another layer of complexity and poses a greater challenge to the giant energy companies getting contracts from the littoral states. The excerpted passage from *Al-Monitor*, a news website with analysts from the Middle East, provides insights into the situation, which is becoming militarized as the tension between Turkey, Greece and the Republic of Cyprus in the Eastern Mediterranean Sea increases.

The author states that Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan calling certain foreign oil companies “bandits of the sea” on 4 November is an indication of rising tensions. The companies that President Erdogan referred to are French energy giant Total SA and Eni SpA of Italy, among others. These companies have secured permits from the Republic of Cyprus to conduct natural gas explorations. On 18 October, Turkey deployed its survey drilling ship *Barbaros* to start oil and gas exploration in the north of Cyprus’s self-claimed drilling areas licensed to Turkish Petroleum (TPAO). Before Erdogan’s statement on 24 October, the Turkish Minister of Defense stated that “[we] will never tolerate new harassment. We have [taken] all kinds of measures. I want everyone to know that we will not tolerate a fait accompli of any sort on this subject.” Also, Turkish drilling ship *Fatih*, escorted by a navy assault boat and a submarine, began survey drilling 60 miles off the coast of the Turkish city of Antalya. Turkish Energy Minister Fatih Donmez signaled the possibility of another drilling ship being deployed to the Eastern Mediterranean to accelerate exploration. While Turkey deployed its drilling ships, the Republic of Cyprus and Greece formed the Middle East Gas Forum with Egypt to coordinate natural gas exploitation policies and counter balance Turkish ambitions.

This exploration traffic has escalated tensions in the Mediterranean, especially between the Republic of Cyprus, Greece and Turkey. It has also further complicated the Cyprus issue, which is already one of the most intractable conflicts in the region. According to Turkey “a Greek frigate tried to block a Turkish vessel” on 18 October, but Turkish warships prevented it from doing so. The rivalry over hydrocarbon reserves in the Eastern Mediterranean between Greece and Turkey has also spilled over to the Aegean Sea. Turkish Minister of Defense Akar threatened to take military action if Greece extends its territorial waters in the Aegean in response to former Greek Foreign Minister Nikos Kaotzias’ announcement of expanding its territorial waters from 6 to 12 nautical miles. The author concludes the article on a cautionary note stating, “the commanders from Turkey, Greece and Cyprus must keep their cool when confronted with the risk of military engagement.” **End OE Watch Commentary (Gunduz)**

“The feud has been brewing for years and now is threatening to boil over, especially as some governments in the area have declared their own overlapping exclusive economic zones.”



Cyprus map from CIA World Factbook (2003).

Source: United States Central Intelligence Agency [Public domain], via Wikimedia Commons, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Cy-map.png>.

(continued)



Continued: Rising Tensions in the Eastern Mediterranean over Natural Gas

Source: Metin Gurcan, “Militarization of Mediterranean rises with exploration disputes,” *al-monitor.com*, 8 November 2018.
<https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2018/11/turkey-egypt-cyprus-mediterranean-tension-escalates.html>

Tensions are rising quickly in the Eastern Mediterranean over sharing hydrocarbon reserves in the area.

The latest developments signal increasing volatility. On Nov. 4, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan called certain foreign oil companies “bandits of the sea” and warned them against conducting exploration activities near Cyprus. Turkey controls the northern third of the divided island...

The feud has been brewing for years and now is threatening to boil over, especially as some governments in the area have declared their own overlapping exclusive economic zones (EEZs).

On Oct. 17, Turkey issued an advisory to ships in the area that it would be conducting seismic surveys in the Eastern Mediterranean beginning the next day and running through Feb. 1.

Indeed, on Oct. 18, military tension over control of economic interests there grew as the Turkish seismic survey drilling ship Barbaros started searching for oil and gas. The ship was exploring areas Ankara has licensed to Turkish Petroleum (TPAO) just north of Cyprus’ self-claimed drilling areas.

That same day, according to Ankara, a Greek frigate tried to block the Turkish vessel, but was prevented from doing so by its Turkish navy escort.

“We will never tolerate new harassment. We have [taken] all kinds of measures. I want everyone to know that we will not tolerate a fait accompli of any sort on this subject,” Turkish Minister of Defense Hulusi Akar said Oct. 24. He also threatened military action if Greece acts on plans to extend its territorial waters in the Aegean. Turkish government spokesman Omer Celik conveyed a similar message Oct. 31, one day after the Turkish drilling ship Fatih... began drilling at the Alanya-1 borehole, 100 kilometers (60 miles) off Antalya. The ship will be survey drilling for 150 days until early April under the protection of a navy assault boat and a submarine.

...Turkish Energy Minister Fatih Donmez noted that other shallow drilling work with the Fatih vessel is planned northwest of Cyprus in November, adding that Turkey is about to buy a second drilling ship to ramp up exploration.

Meanwhile, Egyptian, Greek and Greek Cypriot leaders met Oct. 10 to discuss EEZs in the area of the Eastern Mediterranean near the Greek island of Crete. The leaders also reaffirmed their commitment to explore gas reserves off the coast of Cyprus.

...If the rivalry over sharing hydrocarbon reserves continues, it could spill over to territorial waters and sovereignty issues, which would only escalate tensions.

The Eastern Mediterranean has become an international problem. Turkish media reported Oct. 28 that Turkish F-16s challenged British war planes that were conducting reconnaissance close to the Barbaros ship. Cyprus has issued exploration permits to French energy giant Total SA, (and) Italy’s Eni SpA...

...Turkey doesn’t accept agreements that Cyprus has made with Egypt, Lebanon and Israel to delineate the EEZs, as Ankara says they would infringe on its rights.

Some experts feel Turkey should have declared EEZs... However, there is a growing opinion in Ankara that Turkey should declare an EEZ in 2019 and defend its sovereign rights in the Eastern Mediterranean more robustly.

In conclusion, the remainder of 2018 could be interesting, considering the pace of unfolding events and escalating militarization.

The grim fact everyone should bear in mind is: We are at the threshold of an era when commanders from Turkey, Greece and Cyprus must keep their cool when confronted with the risk of military engagement...



Egyptian Views on Arab Security

OE Watch Commentary: Military delegations from countries belonging to the Middle East Strategic Alliance (MESA), often referred to as a future “Arab NATO,” gathered for their first exercise in mid-November 2018. Hosted by Egypt in its new and expansive Mohammed Naguib military base, the exercises involved forces from the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain and Jordan, along with host Egypt. Lebanese and Moroccan forces were present as observers.

The common thread between MESA members is their Arab identity, reflected in the name of the exercises: “Shield of the Arabs 1.” The exercises prompted supportive media outlets to emphasize the interconnectedness of Egyptian national security and that of other Arab countries, particularly those in the Gulf. For instance, the accompanying excerpted opinion piece from the UAE’s *al-Bayan* repeatedly stresses the shared destiny of Egypt and the broader Arab community (Ummah). The author references unnamed “enemies of the Ummah and of religion” who are constantly seeking to undermine Egypt and by extension the entire Ummah, since “[Egypt’s] security cannot be separated from the security of the Arab nation.”

In early November, Egyptian President Abdel Fattah Sisi alluded to the interconnectedness of Egyptian and Arab security. Speaking at the closing ceremonies of an international youth festival in Egypt, he affirmed that his country’s military would intervene directly if the security of its Arab Gulf allies were to come under threat. Although Sisi has used similar language in the past, his actions on key Arab security issues, including Yemen and Syria, have often diverged from those of his Gulf allies, as noted in the second accompanying article from Egypt’s *Madamasr*.

According to the accompanying passage from Egypt’s semi-official *al-Ahram*, the fundamental threat to joint Egypt-Arab security comes not from Iran but from “transnational terrorism that has been sown in the region by Western powers since 2011.” The deliberate Western plan “to take us back to the age of ignorance” is ultimately aimed at redrawing the region’s borders, in a “clear and forthright plan from the West to benefit the interests of Israel, to avoid Arab countries once again being strong enough to confront them.” MESA, the author believes, is a unified Arab response to these challenges. In a similar vein, the accompanying passage from the Egyptian daily *al-Youm al-Sabaa* sees the “Shield of the Arabs 1” exercises as “sending various messages to the US regarding the capacity of Arabs to ally with one another without US sponsorship.”

End OE Watch Commentary (Winter)

“Egypt cannot ignore its national responsibility, and its security cannot be separated from the security of the Arab nation.”

Source:

Jalal Araf. “The Security of Egypt and the Arab Gulf is a Shared Responsibility,” *al-Bayan*, 11 November 2018. <https://www.albayan.ae/opinions/articles/2018-11-11-1.3405694>

أمن مصر والخليج العربي مسؤولية واحدة

Egypt understands well that it may be constantly targeted by its enemies and those of the Arab community. Egypt understands well that its rise bothers many, and that its progress, which pleases all Arabs, does not please the evil powers waiting in ambush for it and the Arab nation... Arabs only want a stable Egypt, which means a stable Arab nation... any harming of Arab national security will face a severe response and any attack on Arab lands will pay a heavy price... The truth is that Egypt will remain targeted by the enemies of the Ummah and of religion, but at the same time they will confirm that it remains the heart of its Arab Ummah... Egypt cannot ignore its national responsibility, and its security cannot be separated from the security of the Arab nation.

Source:

Amr Said. “News Analysis: Will Egypt Actually Deploy to Protect Gulf Security?” *Mada Masr*, 7 November 2018. <https://goo.gl/58bmpZ>

تحليل إخباري هل مصر تتحرك لحماية أمن الخليج فعلاً؟

Talk about Gulf security is not new, and Sisi has mentioned it more than once, beginning with his presidential campaign in 2014, when he said Egypt would “arrive immediately” if Arab countries needed it... Egypt’s policy toward the Gulf and its security, though, have been the opposite of what Sisi stated and state media repeats. In most crises, the state’s foreign policy has been very independent, even in crises between Egypt and Saudi Arabia. This is not only the case with Saudi Arabia, which is the most important political actor in the Gulf, but also includes conflicts and disagreement with the UAE and Bahrain by extension.

Source:

Jamil Afifi. “‘Shield of the Arabs-1’... A Return to Unified Power, Exercise Achieves Deterrence, and Arab National Security Undivided,” *al-Ahram*, 15 November 2018. <https://goo.gl/2Kykiv>

درع العرب 1 . عودة للقوة الموحدة.. المناورة تحقق الردع.. والأمن القومي العربي لا يتجزأ

... there are also places aflame from transnational terrorism that has been sown in the region by Western powers since 2011. This has turned some countries into fields of conflict, such as Libya which has become fertile ground for the spread of terrorism, and Syria, where terrorists of more than 82 nationalities fight on the field. Major powers are also fighting for influence here, and this naturally affects the balance of power in the Middle East and particularly the Arab world, which have become targets for the great powers. There is a clear plan to strike the national armies in the region in order to facilitate the region’s destruction and redivision... In light of the many crises experienced by the region’s countries and Western attempts to take us back to the age of ignorance by planting those who spread ignorance among the Arabs, all of this is taking place with a clear and forthright plan from the West to benefit the interests of Israel, to avoid Arab countries once again being strong enough to confront them...

Source:

Mohammed Haboush. “Shield of the Arabs... Single Goal, Single Nation Toward Shared Destiny,” *al-Youm al-Sabaa*, 9 November 2018. <https://goo.gl/NSjTaA>

درع العرب.. هدف واحد لوطن واحد نحو مصير مشترك

... throughout the military exercises an Arab vision will be reflected, one which sends various messages to the US regarding the capacity of Arabs to ally with one another without US endorsement. Arab countries have security interests in common, and these can provide a foundation to achieve their interests, whether this be in confronting the dangers of Iran or of terrorism.



Turkey and Kuwait Sign Military Cooperation Agreement

OE Watch Commentary: Gulf nations have sometimes relied on the United States for security; however, this could be changing as they form new alliances. Turkish and Kuwaiti top military officials signed a military cooperation agreement after holding a Military Cooperation Committee meeting on 9-10 October 2018. Both countries agreed to share their military experiences and to coordinate military activities beginning in 2019. The accompanying excerpted article from *Al-Monitor*, a news website with analysts from the Middle East, provides insight into why Kuwait has sought the alliance and what Turkey intends to gain from it.

According to the article, behind this agreement to enhance military cooperation with Turkey is Kuwait's concern about Saudi Arabia's intentions, especially after Mohammed bin Salman (MBS) becoming the heir apparent. The tensions between Saudi Arabia and Kuwait have escalated due to problems over restarting production in common oilfields of Khafji and Wafra. The crown prince MBS was in Kuwait on 30 September 2018 for talks, but the meeting was cut short and failed to resolve the issue. As the author states, Kuwait is "truly afraid of a Saudi invasion because of a hegemony crisis in the oil fields" and "(a) military accord with Turkey now raises the question of whether Kuwait, like Qatar, is looking for military protection." The agreement could lead to the deployment of Turkish troops to Kuwait and the establishment of a Turkish military base.

There have been a couple of questions in the region about how Turkey benefits from this alliance. First, Turkey seeks to expand the market for its defense industry products. A total of 23 Turkish companies attended the 2017 Kuwaiti Defense and Aeronautics Fair to market their defense industry products. As the article notes, the "purchase of Turkish weapons, including armored vehicles" is a possibility. Second, the regional rivalry between Turkey and Saudi Arabia has played a role in forming this alliance. The tension between the two countries has risen, especially after the killing of a Saudi journalist in Saudi Arabia's consulate in Istanbul. Additionally, Saudi Arabia's support for Kurdish groups in Syria has been a point of contention for Turkey. Whether Saudi Arabia will retaliate against Turkey's effort to weaken its influence in the Gulf remains to be seen. **End OE Watch Commentary (Gunduz)**

“Ankara, whose relations with Kuwait have been warming for the past two years, recently signed a military cooperation agreement with the Persian Gulf nation bordering Iraq and Saudi Arabia.”

Source: Fehim Tastekin. "Gulf countries concerned as Turkey cozies up to Kuwait," *al-monitor.com*, 19 October 2018. <https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2018/10/turkey-gulf-rapprochement-with-kuwait-may-cause-tension.html>

As repercussions from Turkey's move to set up a military base in Qatar continue to resonate, Ankara is going ahead with adding a military dimension to relations with Kuwait. Ankara, whose relations with Kuwait have been warming for the past two years, recently signed a military cooperation agreement with the Persian Gulf nation bordering Iraq and Saudi Arabia.

According to the agreement signed by deputy chiefs of staff of the two countries during the Turkey-Kuwait Military Cooperation Committee meeting, the two nations are planning to share their military experiences and coordinate their activities beginning in 2019.

The agreement occurs amid the backdrop of Turkey's close ties with the Muslim Brotherhood, Turkish moves to become a shield for Qatar against the Saudi-United Arab Emirates alliance, the decision by Riyadh to assist Kurds in Syria and the tensions that erupted with this month's disappearance of the Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi in Istanbul.

Kuwait became concerned about the intentions of Mohammed bin Salman after he was named Saudi Arabia's crown prince last year...

Mohammed's visit to Kuwait on Sept. 30 to discuss the recurring problems between the two countries and the Qatar issue did not go well...

The crisis between the two countries escalated in 2014 due to disputes over their common oil fields of Khafji and Wafra ... In Kuwait's political corridors, Mohammed is now referred to as "little Saddam."

To cope with these pressures, Kuwait has been approaching actors such as Turkey who could help provide some form of protection...

A military accord with Turkey now raises the question of whether Kuwait, like Qatar, is looking for military protection... a Kuwaiti-Turkish accord could lead to deployment of Turkish troops in Kuwait... "The accord doesn't rule out deployment of Turkish troops in Kuwait and purchase of Turkish weapons, including armored vehicles, along the lines of the Qatar-Turkey accord that defends Doha against Gulf countries,"...

Turkey's efforts to sell defense industry products to Kuwait are not a secret. Turkey participated in the 2017 Kuwaiti Defense and Aeronautics Fair with 23 companies.

Lebanese researcher Ali Mourad said... "Kuwaitis need a regional force like Turkey to deal with Saudi ill intentions. They are truly afraid of a Saudi invasion because of a hegemony crisis in the oil fields, ..."

... "This is not really what [Kuwaitis] want but they have no other choice. As a regional force they can't ask for help from Iran. There is no regional power other than Turkey."

...Relations gained further momentum with the signing of six agreements during the Ankara visit of Kuwaiti Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah in September 2017.



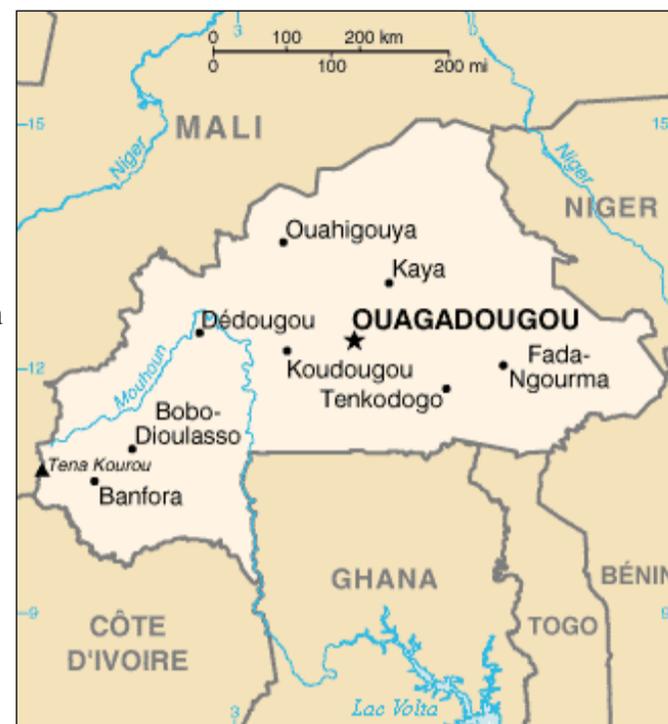
Mysterious Militants Threaten Burkina Faso amid Security Crisis

OE Watch Commentary: On 10 October, the French-language Malian publication *journaldumali.com* published the accompanying excerpted article about French support to Burkina Faso as part of Operation Barkhane. The article described the emergency Burkina Faso is facing, with more than 20 members of its security forces having been killed in the two weeks before the article was published. France accepts the responsibility to provide this support to Burkina Faso on the grounds that it supports national forces anywhere in the Sahel-Saharan band, which in addition to Burkina Faso, also includes Mali, Niger, Mauritania, and Chad. According to a commander in Operation Barkhane, who is quoted in the article, France maintains a reserve capacity to support the other countries in the region beyond Mali, including the ability to intervene in Burkina Faso by flying in troops from an airbase in Niamey, Niger.

The article also confirms France is already carrying out cross-border operations with Burkinabe ground forces and that France maintains special forces in the Burkinabe capital, Ouagadougou, which have had to respond to al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) terrorist attacks in that city. The article notes that France is also concerned about risk of the violence spreading closer to the neighboring countries, such as Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire.

Another challenge that the article raises is that since the overthrow in late 2014 of Burkinabe President Blaise Compaore, elite units of the army have been dissolved and the Burkinabe forces have failed to recover their former assertiveness. They now seem helpless in the face of the security crisis. Moreover, the current president is reluctant to give the army too much power because of the country's history of military coups.

One final challenge is that there are some groups operating in eastern Burkina Faso that are not from the AQIM-aligned Ansaroul Islam. In fact, as the article mentions, France is still trying to identify who these groups are that are now carrying out an increasing number of attacks in that region and as a French officer notes, they are unclear how many fighters are in that group. **End OE Watch Commentary (Zenn)**



Burkina Faso Map.

Source: Burkina Faso carte, public domain, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Burkina_Faso_carte.png

“At present, the French forces are trying to identify the groups at work in the east of the country, where explosions and attacks are multiplying.”

Source: “La force Barkhane les yeux rivés sur le Burkina (Barkhane force eyes on Burkina),” *journaldumali.com*, 10 October 2018. <https://www.journaldumali.com/2018/10/10/sahel-la-force-barkhane-les-yeux-rives-sur-le-burkina/>

A victim of increasing attacks on its soil in recent months, Burkina Faso no longer hesitates to solicit the French Barkhane force, which provides support to this country in the Sahel to stop the jihadist threat. At the request of Ouagadougou, the French army conducted an air strike in northern Burkina Faso after an attack on a gendarmerie detachment that killed one person. Barkhane also sent two helicopters, a Tiger and a Gazelle, to the eastern region of Pama, after the death of a Burkinabe soldier. If the French effort is actually concentrated in Mali, “we always maintain a reserve intervention capacity to support the countries of the zone,” said one [commander] to Paris. “Barkhane has the means to intervene quickly by air in Burkina from its base in Niamey, Niger,” said another source close to the case.

Meanwhile, French forces participated alongside the Burkinabe army in a reconnaissance mission, also in the east of the country, according to military sources. Paris is openly worried about the rise in violence in northern and eastern Burkina Faso, and the risks of the contagion in neighboring countries such as Ghana or Côte d'Ivoire.

Since the overthrow in late 2014 of President Blaise Compaore, which has resulted in the dissolution of elite units of the army, the Burkinabe forces have failed to recover and seem helpless in the face of security degradation. In a country accustomed to attempted coups, the Burkinabe president Roch Marc Christian Kaboré is reluctant to give much power to an army long loyal to Compaore.

At present, the French forces are trying to identify the groups at work in the east of the country, where explosions and attacks are multiplying. For the last few weeks, groups have emerged in eastern Burkina Faso, which clearly do not belong to Ansaroul Islam, the jihadist group in the north of the country responsible for several deadly attacks on the army, an officer said. “But we do not have enough elements yet to specify the volume, [and] from where they come.”



Fear of Islamist Terrorism Taking Root in South Africa

OE Watch Commentary: Several violent incidents this year have hinted at Islamist terrorism taking root in South Africa; however, some believe it is too early to detect a pattern. As the accompanying excerpted article from the South African *Institute for Security Studies* details, troubling links to Islamist terrorism appear to be emerging. The crimes in South Africa raising the alarm include: two deadly attacks on mosques in KwaZulu-Natal and the Western Cape; the arrest of the “Thulsie twins,” as they are known, for purportedly plotting violence against Jewish and US interests; the murder of a married couple of South African botanists by individuals with purported links to ISIS; and several other incidents.

On 23 October, a Verulam magistrate charged 11 men with murder, attempted murder, extortion, kidnapping, arson and contraventions of the Explosives Act and terrorism act relating to a mosque attack in Verulam in addition to other bombings. A manual on how to make bombs and carry out assassinations, ISIS propaganda and flags were found in the home of the group’s ringleader. Yet another mosque attack occurred in 2018, this time in Malmesbury by a Somali national who stabbed parishioners, killing one before the police killed him. Although the perpetrator was a Sunni and the mosque was Sunni, it is believed the mosque was targeted because its leadership was considered too liberal.

Besides these recent events, there have been past indicators that Islamic extremism has found a place in South Africa. As an example, Khalfan Khamis Mohamed, one of the suspects in the 1998 al-Qaeda bombings of the US embassy in Nairobi, was arrested in South Africa. Samantha Lewthwaite is another example. A British national and alleged member of al-Shabaab, who is often referred to as the white widow, she spent several years hiding in South Africa.

Cheryl Frank, head of the Transnational Threats and International Crime program at the *Institute for Security Studies*, notes South Africa has traditionally had a cautious approach to counterterrorism. Frank also notes that South Africa’s perception of the problem is starting to change as the number of incidents increase. However, as the article explains, with high levels of inequality and several minority communities feeling excluded, including not only Muslims but white Afrikaners as well, South Africa is ripe for all sorts of extremism. **End OE Watch Commentary (Feldman)**

“Recent incidents may be unrelated, but there are enough links to warrant vigilance around violent extremism.”



Samantha Lewthwaite, aka the White Widow, is one of several Islamists who previously hid in South Africa.

Source: Interpol/Wikipedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Samantha_Lewthwaite_Interpol.jpg, Fair Use.

Source: Peter Fabricius, “Is Islamist Terrorism Starting to Emerge in South Africa,” *Institute for Security Studies*, 25 October 2018. <https://issafrica.org/iss-today/is-islamist-terrorism-starting-to-emerge-in-south-africa>

Recent incidents may be unrelated, but there are enough links to warrant vigilance around violent extremism.

Since the start of this year a number of violent incidents that could hint at Islamist extremism have occurred in South Africa. Some analysts suspect many of these episodes are connected, and that if one joins all the dots, they outline a disturbing picture. Others believe it’s too early to detect a pattern. Yet some links are emerging more clearly.

However Frank says it’s not quite clear if South Africa’s intelligence authorities are ignoring evidence of current Islamist extremism or are just hiding it to avoid causing alarm.



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Chad to Combat Boko Haram Closer to Nigerian Border

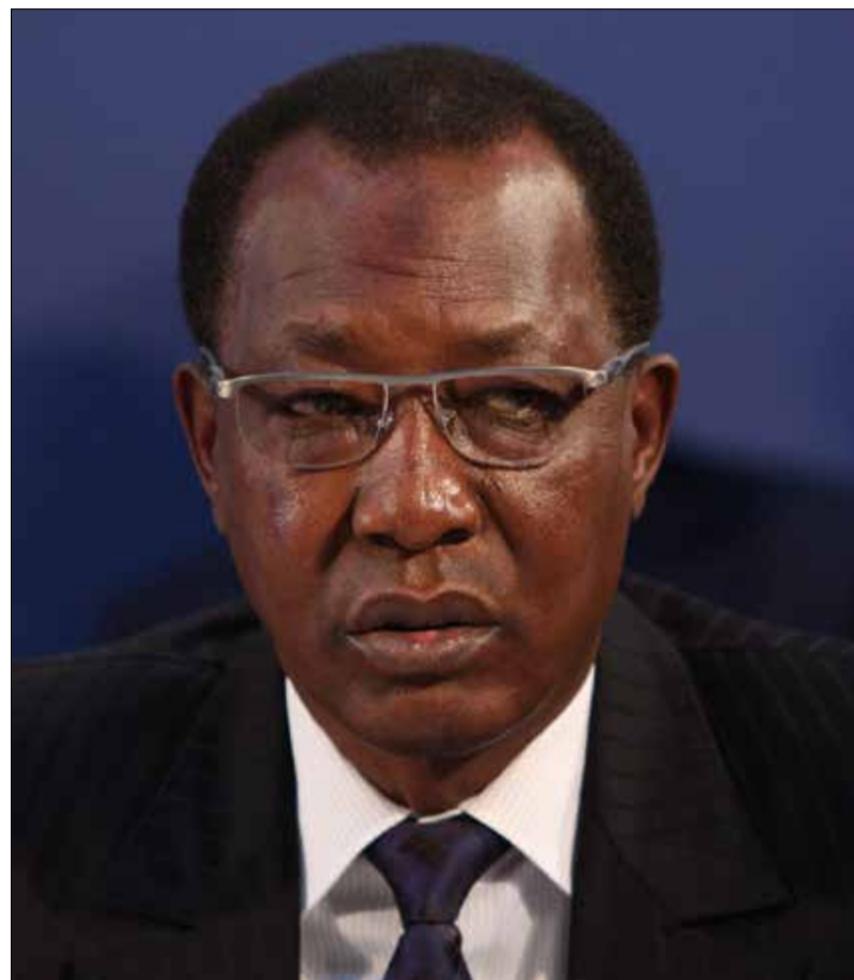
OE Watch Commentary: On 10 October, Boko Haram attacked the Chadian army in the town of Kaiga Kindjiria, which is north of Lake Chad. This was among the northernmost attacks Boko Haram ever conducted, suggesting the group was expanding its area of operations. According to the accompanying excerpted French-language article from *tchadinfos.com*, 62 Boko Haram members were killed during the operation.

The article discussed the reaction to the attack by Chadian President Idris Deby. Deby visited the site of the battle on 17 October and during his visit decided to relocate a Chadian military base to Kaiga Kindjiria. This means the base will be located closer to Chad's borders with Nigeria and Niger at a distance of 18 kilometers and 14 kilometers, respectively. According to the article, this will allow the Chadian soldiers to be in a more strategic location and react more quickly, because Boko Haram has been operating around the three countries' border area. The article interviewed a military officer, who stated that bringing the Chadian soldiers closer to the border would also prevent Boko Haram from entering Chadian territory in the first place and therefore protect the lives of civilians.

Deby also made an announcement during his visit to grant leave for soldiers who have been in Kaiga Kindjiria for one year already. This is a luxury that the Nigerian soldiers on the other side of the border have not been afforded. There, where Boko Haram originated, the group's attacks have unsurprisingly been much more consistent and more severe than Chad and soldiers have had their time in service extended. President Deby's strategy to move Chadian soldiers closer to the border and provide rest to some soldiers was seemingly done on a whim during the visit, but it nonetheless could be a welcome development for Chadian citizens in the border region and for the soldiers at the new base in Kaiga Kindjiria. **End**

OE Watch Commentary (Zenn)

“From now on, the Boko Haram elements will see the Chadian army very close to them.”



Idriss Déby 2014 (cropped).

Source: Idriss Déby 2014 (cropped), open government license, v1.0, [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Idriss_D%C3%A9by_2014_\(cropped\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Idriss_D%C3%A9by_2014_(cropped).jpg).

Source: “Terrorisme: le Président Deby est à Kaiga Kindjiria dernier lieu d’attaque de Boko Haram (President Deby is in Kaiga Kindjiria last place of attack of Boko Haram),” *tchadinfos.com*, 17 October 2018. <https://tchadinfos.com/tchad/terrorisme-le-president-deby-est-a-kaiga-kindjiria-dernier-lieu-dattaque-de-boko-haram/>

Chadian Head of State Idriss Deby visited the Lake Chad region area of Kaiga Kindjiria on the border between Chad, Niger and Nigeria on 17 October to see first-hand the situation on the ground after the last attack. On 10 October, a position of the Chadian army was attacked by elements of the nebulous Boko Haram sect in Kaiga Kindjiria where 62 terrorists were killed by soldiers of the Chadian army. President Deby decided during his visit on 17 October to relocate Baga Sola's No. 4 Military Zone to Kaiga Kindjiria, just a short way from the Nigerian and Nigerian borders.

This decision is strategic because the nebulous Boko Haram sect is still committing its attacks in a radius very close to the Chad-Niger-Nigeria border. The President of the Republic has also granted relief for the soldiers who have been in this locality for one year. “From now on, the Boko Haram elements will see the Chadian army very close to them,” said a military source. The proximity of the presence of the Chadian defense and security forces will certainly prevent them from infiltrating Chadian territory and committing acts of barbarity.

When a River Runs Through It: Riverine Operations in Contemporary Conflict

By LTC (R) Lester Grau, LTC (R) Leroy Denniston

Waterways and population centers will be factors in future war. Frequently they will be collocated and will become operational key terrain. Riverine operations will be a part of future military actions and will be an Army problem. The best way to prepare for a future problem is through study, training, and equipment design and development.

<https://community.apan.org/wg/tradoc-g2/fmso/m/fmso-monographs/195094>



Boko Haram Execution of Midwife Demoralizes Nigeria

OE Watch Commentary: On 16 October the Nigerian publication *Pulse.ng* published the accompanying excerpted article expressing dismay about Nigeria's inability to rescue Hauwa Liman before Boko Haram's Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS)-loyal faction executed her days earlier. She was a 24-year old midwife working as staff for the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). Boko Haram had kidnapped her during an attack on her worksite in Rann, Borno State earlier in the year and threatened to kill her in September after the group killed another young woman, who was also a staff member of the ICRC and kidnapped in that same raid in Rann.

The article notes that when Hauwa Liman was kidnapped, it is ironic Nigerian soldiers were protecting her worksite. The article emphasized it was not as if she was in a vulnerable place, such as alone on a street. Even though she was in a seemingly safe place, the jihadists still succeeded in kidnapping her. This represents a failure on the part of the military, according to the article. Also ironic, according to the article, is that her work was intended to save lives or help bring to life newborns, yet she herself lost her life while doing this work.

Although the article recognizes that Nigerian government officials claim to have done their best to negotiate Hauwa Liman's freedom, it states that they cannot be trusted given their record of inaccuracies and even deceit. The article emphasizes the government failed her, but so did the society from which Boko Haram, after all, emerged—that is, Nigerian society. In conclusion, the article argues that Hauwa Liman's death is an indicator of where Nigeria stands in the war against Boko Haram. Despite government claims to have technically defeated Boko Haram, her death is a "sad reminder" of how far Nigeria has to go to really defeat Boko Haram. **End OE Watch Commentary (Zenn)**

“The government failed Liman the way it has failed everyone still in Boko Haram custody.”

Source: Nigeria failed Hauwa Liman and led her to death at Boko Haram's feet," *Pulse.ng*, 16 October 2018. <https://www.pulse.ng/news/local/nigeria-failed-hauwa-liman-who-was-killed-by-boko-haram-id8986011.html>

The irony in the execution story of Hauwa Liman is that she was kidnapped right before a battalion of soldiers, right before tanks and an entire regiment. She was not kidnapped on the streets of Borno or in some nondescript community near Sambisa. Liman was a 24-year-old midwife (Red Cross) On October 15, the terrorists took her life in the most brutal manner imaginable after threatening to do exactly that, last month.

She was a staff of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and she was in Borno to tend to internally displaced persons fleeing Boko Haram bombs and bullets. She was in Borno to help nurse hearts, broken limbs and wounds and restore smiles to the faces of the frustrated and dejected. The government failed Liman the way it has failed everyone still in Boko Haram custody.

It's difficult to believe anyone in government these days and there's no reason why we should believe the government's spokesperson on this occasion. The bottom-line is that we badly need to review our nation's security architecture and keep Nigerians a lot safer. We are nowhere near defeating Boko Haram technically or physically. Liman's gruesome murder is a sad reminder of how far we still have to go to deal Boko Haram a fatal blow.



Boko Haram Hostages (2015).

Source: *OtagesBokoHaram2015VOA*, public domain, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:OtagesBokoHaram2015VOA.PNG>.



African Standby Force: Still Not Ready for Primetime?

OE Watch Commentary: The African Union (AU) directed African Standby Force (ASF) is in the news once again because there are still questions as to whether or not it is ready to deploy. This uncertainty lingers despite its establishment in 2003 with an anticipated operational date of 2010. However, as the accompanying excerpted article from the South African *Institute for Security Studies* explains, some progress has been made in further standing up the force. One such effort was the establishment of the first ASF continental logistics base in Douala, Cameroon in January of this year, an action that will significantly boost the AU's ability to provide logistical assistance during future peace support operations.

Although the ASF is referred to in the singular, it is actually comprised of five regional standby forces. In 2017, the AU heads of state and the Peace and Security Council mandated a team to assess the operational readiness of each of those five forces. The subsequent report showed that while the West, South and East regions had made substantial progress towards establishing their standby forces, the Central and North Africa regions lagged behind.

With the ASF and its missions originally conceived fifteen years ago, the need to update some of the founding concepts has been noted. Thus, the lessons learned from AU missions and growing security threats arising from transnational criminal activity, terrorism, and humanitarian crises were part of the discussions during several workshops held in October of this year. At the same time, a broader AU doctrine on peace support operations was debated. As the article's author states, new thinking is required regarding the contexts in which the ASF would be deployed, and adds that whether or not the ASF is deployed is dependent not just on the actual crises happening, but also political will.

Complicating the work of the policymakers trying to resolve the ASF's technical issues is what to do with another force, the African Capacity for Immediate Response to Crises (ACIRC), which like the ASF has never deployed. ACIRC, which was supposed to provide rapid interventions pending the ASF becoming operational, is comprised of units of 14 voluntary militaries that, unlike the ASF's five geographically-constrained regional brigades, could be sent anywhere on the continent. There is concern though, that friction could arise as ACIRC, which is itself a political issue, is possibly harmonized with the ASF.

The AU commission is tackling many of the ASF's technical issues, some, but not all of which have been detailed here. However, as the article's author states, without political will on the part of African states and regional bodies, the work towards new policies, doctrines, and concepts will merely be a paper exercise.

End OE Watch Commentary (Feldman)

“Fifteen years after (the African Standby Force) was formed, political backing by African states is still the biggest challenge.”

Source: Ndubuisi Christian Ani, “Africa: Is the African Standby Force Any Closer to Being Deployed?,” *Institute for Security Studies*, 2 November 2018. <https://issafrica.org/iss-today/is-the-african-standby-force-any-closer-to-being-deployed>

Fifteen years after it was formed, political backing by African states is still the biggest challenge.

The African Union (AU)-directed African Standby Force (ASF) has not been deployed since its establishment in 2003. This is despite the AU's extensive experience with peace support operations in countries like Burundi, Sudan, Somalia, Mali and the Central African Republic (CAR).

Over recent decades it has become clear that the AU is increasingly willing to engage in peace enforcement missions, unlike the UN which deploys only after peace deals have been reached. The AU Mission in Somalia is an example of this more offensive approach. An AU peace support operation doctrine would thus include deployment to enforce peace and stabilize crisis areas so that the UN could take over.



“While some components of the Africa Standby Force, such as the East Africa one pictured here during a field training exercise, have made substantial progress to being ready to deploy, others have not.”

Source: Chief Petty Officer Robert Gallagher, USN/Wikimedia, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:East_Africa_Standby_Force_Field_Training_Exercise_DVIDS219773.jpg, Public Domain.



Amidst Concerns, AMISOM Prepares to Withdraw from Somalia

OE Watch Commentary: The African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), after several delays, plans to begin withdrawing its troops in February 2019, however, as the accompanying excerpted article from *The East African* points out, several troop-contributing nations are not keen on leaving. Additionally, even though the troop withdrawal will be a phased event, with the final ones not departing until 2021, there are strong concerns that the Somali National Army (SNA) will be unable to independently provide security for the nation.

The document guiding this phased withdrawal is known as the Concept of Operations (CONOP) and was developed by AMISOM leadership as well as representatives of the Somali government and African Union (AU); the latter because AMISOM is operated by the AU with approval of the UN Security Council. CONOP, which in part focuses on reconfiguring the Somali security forces, still needs to be approved by AU and senior defense officials from troop-contributing countries.

General Adan Mulata, Kenya's Assistant Chief of Defense Forces in charge of operations, training, and doctrine, is one who has expressed some hesitation in setting a firm date for withdrawal. He noted that while AMISOM withdrawal is inevitable, stakeholders should take into consideration the conditions on the ground. General Mulata is not the only Kenyan concerned about the timing. Kenya's President Uhuru Kenyatta for much of this past year has been critical of AMISOM's planned exit, stating that both the AU and UN need to be practical because the SNA is not ready to assume full responsibility for security. As Kenya borders Somalia and has had to deal with the Somali based terrorist group al Shabaab launching attacks in Kenya, any move that might create a vacuum in Somalia that could allow al Shabaab to strengthen is worrisome to President Kenyatta.

While Uganda does not border Somalia, its troops have been a significant part of AMISOM. Uganda would like its troops to continue serving there, provided new funding for them can be found. That is quite uncertain as AMISOM, which entered Somalia in 2007, has been struggling due to reduced and irregular funding. A major blow in particular was the European Union, which at one point was providing a \$200 million annual stipend to AMISOM, but reduced that by 20 percent. Thus, while there are concerns that the CONOP timetable for withdrawal may be too ambitious, it is uncertain if there is financial support to stretch it out much further. **End OE Watch Commentary (Feldman)**

“The African Union Mission in Somalia is going ahead with plans to withdraw its troops in February next year even though some troops-contributing countries are not keen on leaving.”



Plans are for AMISOM troops, such as this Djiboutian soldier patrolling a base in Beledweyne, Somalia, to depart Somalia.

Source: Skill1st/Wikimedia, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Djiboutian_Soldier_patrol_the_base_in_Beledweyne,_Somalia.jpg, CC BY-SA 4.0.

Source: Fred Oluoch, “AMISOM ready to withdraw,” *The East African*, 12 November 2018. <https://www.theeastafrican.co.ke/news/ea/Amisom-ready-to-withdraw/4552908-4845956-ibf46r/index.html>

The African Union Mission in Somalia is going ahead with plans to withdraw its troops in February next year even though some troops-contributing countries are not keen on leaving.

Known as the Concept of Operations (CONOPs), the document will guide Amisom's activities and operations for the 2018-2021 period, marking the final phase of the transition and eventual exit from Somalia.

According to Amisom spokesperson, Col Richard Omwega, the CONOPS focuses on the implementation of Somalia Transition Plan and reconfiguration of the military in preparation for conditional handover of security responsibility to Somalia security forces, and opening and securing of main supply routes in the country in a prioritized order.

However due to reduced and irregular funding, the UN Security Council Resolution 2372 issued in 2017 had instructed Amisom to reduce its uniformed personnel to a maximum 21,626 in readiness for a full pull-out in 2020.



NGOs Tell Story of Southern Mali, One Post at a Time

OE Watch Commentary: Getting news about southern Mali is incredibly difficult, but rewarding when one can find it. There is no printed press south of the capital Bamako and only three local radio stations. The radio stations have no archived internet record of their programming. Most of the national and international press is focused on the central and northern regions, where the country is in a state of war. There have been a number of NGOs working south of the capital and thanks to their press releases and official communiqués, a media picture of the security situation in southern Mali is possible. However, due to safety issues most of the international NGOs have pulled out of southern Mali, preferring to operate from their centrally located HQs in Bamako. This has made it even harder to get a media picture of what is taking place in the region.

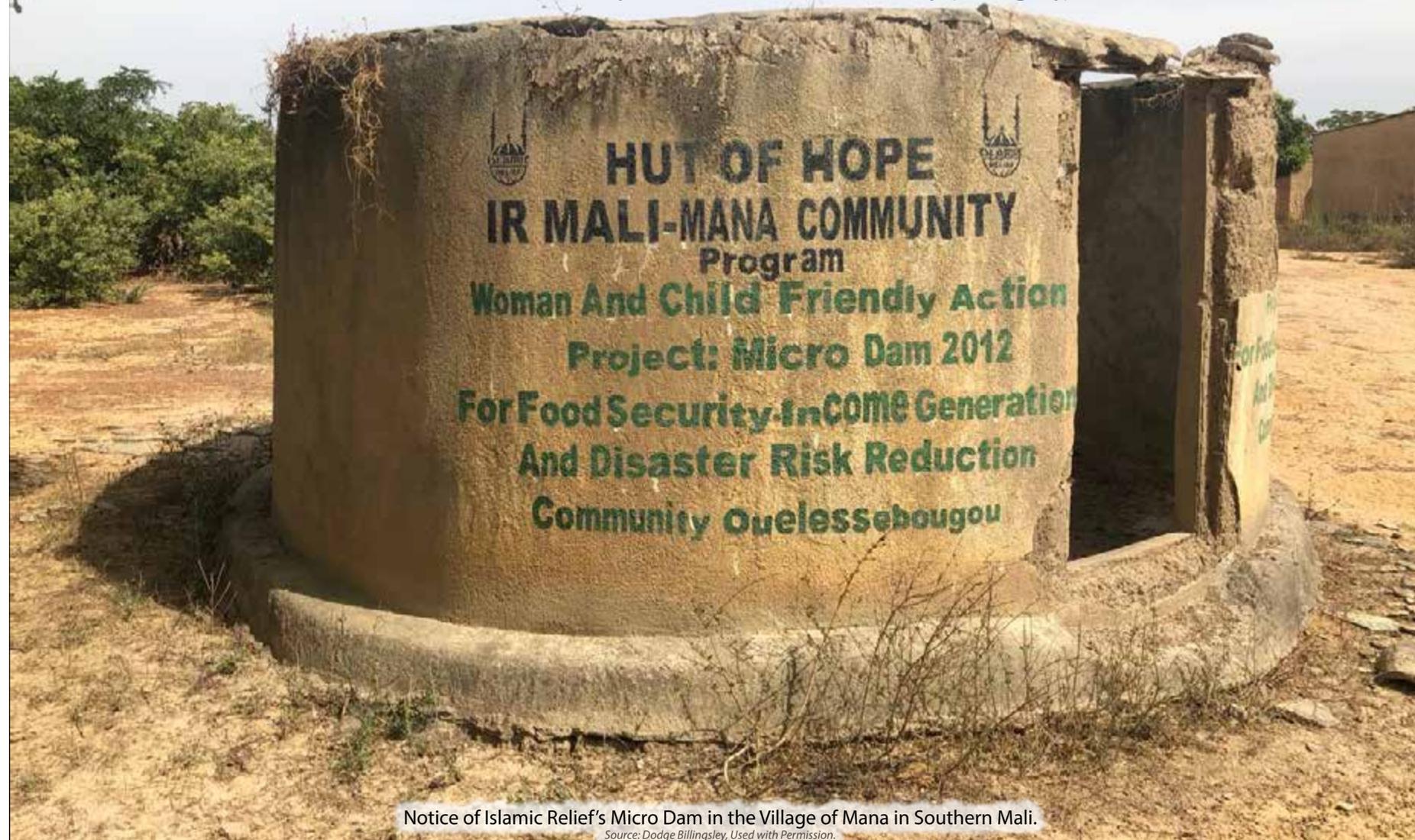
For the time being, security in southern Mali is focused around food and there is real concern among many NGOs here that if the basic needs of the population cannot be met, the threat of instability will increase or be exploited by those who hope to destabilize the region in similar fashion to what is happening in the north of the country.

Consider the accompanying excerpt published by *Islamic Relief Ireland* regarding food security in Southern Mali and the recent post from their Mali Facebook page noting a countrywide forum on climate change and addressing recent flooding in the area. The director of the Ouessabougou office of Islamic Relief has publicly stated that the organization's work to provide food security is a stabilizing factor on the region.

While not widely reported, micro dams are a significant part of Islamic Relief's food security strategy in southern Mali. Another micro dam built by Islamic Relief will be inaugurated near the village of Siranama in early December, putting the number of micro dams in the region built by Islamic Relief to over 10. The purpose of the dams is to collect water during the rainy season that can be stored for farming during the dry season.

Finding information about micro dams in the press is particularly difficult. Reporting is also uneven from Islamic Relief and split up between sub pages from Islamic Relief's global presence. In fact, it was Islamic Relief Ireland, not Islamic Relief Mali, which recently reported on the success of the micro dam near Banankoro, highlighting the benefits of the dam to nearby villagers. While the press releases of an NGO are meant to highlight various projects and not provide in-depth reporting, when asked about the dams, a local farmer in Simidji inadvertently supported Islamic Relief Mali's claims that the micro dams provide a distinct agricultural benefit, lamenting that there was no micro dam near his village.

At the same time, there is a concern in Mali about the impact that deforestation is having on social stability. For decades the forests of the region have been chopped down for firewood essential for cooking the daily diet of corn and millet. Deforestation has been noted to cause a shortened rainy season, a reduction in crop yields, forcing families to send their children to nearby goldmines for additional income. While the press continues to focus its attention on the north of the country, NGOs provide the only, albeit sporadic and self-promoting, media picture of local and international efforts to secure the south of the country. **End OE Watch Commentary (Billingsley)**



Notice of Islamic Relief's Micro Dam in the Village of Mana in Southern Mali.

Source: Dodge Billingsley, Used with Permission.



Continued: NGOs Tell Story of Southern Mali, One Post at a Time

Source: “Atelier de Dialogue Talanoa organisé par Islamic Relief avec ses partenaires dont le PAM et les services étatiques sur les problématiques du changement climatique. (Talanoa Dialogue Workshop organized by Islamic Relief with its partners including WFP and state services on climate change issues.)” *Islamic Relief – Mali*, Facebook, September 19, 2018. <https://www.facebook.com/irwmali/>

Source: “Reflections from Mali,” *Islamic Relief – Ireland*, <https://www.islamic-relief.ie/reflections-from-mali/>

...Working together to preserve our planet is of utmost urgency - we must act now or pay the price of inaction.

...The impact this project had on over 1,200 people living there was evident. Local women who used to spend much of their days walking in the blistering heat to fetch water for their families now only had to walk for a few seconds to have access to clean water for drinking, cooking, cleaning and farming. The locals then brought us to see the village mosque, which also had a tap in front of it so worshipers could benefit from it by making ablution...



“Working together to preserve our planet is of utmost urgency - we must act now or pay the price of inaction.”



TOP: Micro Dam near village of Banankoro, BOTTOM: Local Islamic Relief Director and Banankoro Village Representative survey Micro Dam .

Source: Dodge Billingsley, Used with Permission.



Tiny Lesotho's Large Military Budget

OE Watch Commentary: Completely surrounded by South Africa, the tiny country of Lesotho spends 3.9 percent of its budget on defense. Some South Africans believe that this is a large amount of defense spending relative to other government expenditures. In the accompanying excerpted article from the South African website *The Conversation*, the author argues that Lesotho should cut its military spending, though interestingly, he also argues going beyond a substantial cut to completely eliminating it from the budget.

Starting with the economic argument, the article notes that in 2017 Lesotho allocated \$52.6 million to defense, and that the country's average income for about 95 percent of the population is \$346 per annum. With a population of 2.2 million, if the military were eliminated and the money distributed to the population, households with two adults would see an increase of \$68 per year; a considerable sum in Lesotho for a family mired in poverty. Another reason given for eliminating the military is its historic interference with the democratic process. Repeatedly, the military has been used to thwart political opponents and has staged coups. Combined with a poor human rights record, the military has been criticized as an obstacle to democracy.

The final reason given for dissolving the military is that it serves no significant security function. It has been well documented that in practice, Lesotho's external security is guaranteed by South Africa. Indeed, South Africa is considered a military powerhouse in Africa and its defense expenditures are 70 times that of Lesotho. There are, as the article points out, 36 nations in the world without a regular army, although some do have police that act as their country's de facto military. Costa Rica was given as an example, with its high expenditures on education and health possible, in part, because it is not diverting resources to support an army.

The South African academic who penned this article realizes that there would be difficulties in demilitarization. For one, it would initially require spending more money as severance pay and on other items necessary to close down the armed services. Still, per his calculations, in the long run it would be worth it, not just for the economic benefits but also, as he notes, to strengthen the country's democracy. While some may argue that it is unlikely Lesotho will decrease its defense expenditure, and that arguments for maintaining it were not presented, the article's author has succeeded in bringing attention to the concerns that an impoverished, tiny, enclaved country has such a large military budget. **End OE Watch Commentary (Feldman)**

“By any standards – and particularly for a country as impoverished as Lesotho – [the 3.9% of government expenditure spent on defense] is an indefensible amount of money.”



Lesotho Defence Force Deputy Commander Maj. Gen. Motsomotso during U.S. Army Africa coordinated Medical Readiness Exercise 14-1, Feb. 3 - 14 in Maseru, Lesotho. (2014).

Source: <http://en.farsnews.com/newstext.aspx?nn=13930608000589>, Fars News Agency, CC BY - SA 4.0.

Source: Geoffrey Thomas Harris, “How Lesotho could abandon its army and put the money to better use,” *The Conversation*, 11 November 2018. <https://theconversation.com/how-lesotho-could-abandon-its-army-and-put-the-money-to-better-use-106179>

By any standards – and particularly for a country as impoverished as Lesotho – this is an indefensible amount of money.

Second, from its inception, the Lesotho military has interfered with democratic processes and engaged in human rights abuses. Historically, it has been used by the government to thwart political opposition. In 1986, of its own volition it staged a coup and took over political power. In April 1994, a group of soldiers took four government ministers hostage, and killed the deputy prime minister. And in August 2014, the military attempted another coup, but failed.

Third, the country's poverty levels and poor socio-economic indicators mean that government's budgetary resources must be allocated with particular care. Almost 60% of its population earns less than USD\$1.90 a day.



China's Racism Problem in Africa

OE Watch Commentary: While many in Africa are grateful for Chinese funding of numerous African-based megaprojects, initially China often brought its own workforce to construct the dams, railroads, power plants, and numerous other infrastructure projects it was financing. This generated anger in the African populace, who felt they were being left out of the employment opportunities these large-scale undertakings should have provided. Following pushback from African governments, more African workers have been hired onto Chinese-funded ventures in Africa. However, as the accompanying excerpt from the *Deutsche Welle* website notes, this increased mixing of workers has not been without trouble, as African workers claim the Chinese have exhibited racism against them.

The article's author relates how Chinese workers bring their own cultural as well as political perspectives when they set off to work in Africa. Because China is one of the most homogeneous countries in the world, with 92 percent of the population belonging to the Han ethnic group and only 0.4 percent born abroad, many Chinese have not had the opportunity to interact with people from significantly different cultures than their own. As a political analyst quoted in the article noted, being indoctrinated by one Chinese identity and one Chinese culture leads you to a xenophobic outlook. Differences in work cultures aggravate the divide. For example, the Chinese often work without a break. Another difference, according to the article, is that the Chinese tend to have a very hierarchical mindset, meaning they do what the boss tells them to do as opposed to a more independent thinking approach.

There appears to be little to no effort on the part of the Chinese contingents to address the racism issue. As the article explains, China is not promoting multiculturalism; instead its political indoctrination programs promote Chinese identity and culture. Additionally, the Chinese government does not look at it as a problem they need to address, thus leaving African governments to handle the situation. African governments, however, are often slow to criticize the Chinese as they value Chinese investments in their countries.

Looking at Africans in China reveals the situation is not much different. The Chinese city of Guangzhou is home to 16,000 Africans, the largest population from the continent in Asia. While there have been some meetings and exchanges to improve the situation, racism is still rampant and many hotels there do not welcome African guests. The term "Chinafrica" noted in the article is a portmanteau reflecting China's large and influential presence in Africa. However, as the article describes, Africa welcomes Chinese investment, but the racist mindset of some Chinese workers that accompanies those investments, not at all.

End OE Watch Commentary (Feldman)

“Chinese money is cranking up Africa's economy. However, the conduct of some Chinese people on the continent is causing displeasure among the locals.”

Source: Martina Schwikowski, "The racist face of the Chinese presence in Africa," *Deutsche Welle*, 9 November 2018. <https://www.dw.com/en/the-racist-face-of-the-chinese-presence-in-africa/a-46223068>

Chinese money is cranking up Africa's economy. However, the conduct of some Chinese people on the continent is causing displeasure among the locals. Does 'Chinafrica' have a racism problem?

The construction phase of the railway repeatedly hit the headlines over allegations of racism. Kenyan journalists reported that Chinese workers did not want to share a table at lunchtime with their African colleagues, and that insults and humiliation were the order of the day.

The Chinese government does little against the racism of its citizens. That comes as no surprise to Steve Tsang. "China's governing elite does not really have a strong incentive to deal with bad behavior of citizens. They leave that to the African authorities," he said.



While much of Africa has welcomed Chinese funding for large scale projects, for example the Mombasa-Nairobi railway pictured here, there have been complaints that some Chinese workers attached to such projects exhibit racism against Africans.

Source: Mwangi Kirubi, <https://www.flickr.com/photos/mwangee/34181402040/>, CC BY-NC 2.0.



Ethiopia Arrests 63 Senior Military and Intelligence Officials

OE Watch Commentary: In a move by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed that furthers Ethiopia's break with its authoritarian past, 63 senior military and intelligence officers have been arrested. The charges, according to the accompanying excerpted article from the *East African* news website, include corruption for 27 officials and human rights abuses for the other 36. Such arrests, as the article notes, are a rare move against the country's very powerful security apparatus. There is even more bad news for some in the security apparatus: the arrests do not appear to be over, as there is a manhunt underway for additional suspects.

The suspected corruption, according to the country's attorney general, Berhanu Tsegaye, occurred at the military-run Metals and Engineering Corporation (METEC). While the company is involved with the production of military equipment, it is also involved in civilian projects, including the immense Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam the country is building. According to the attorney general, \$2 billion worth of goods were purchased by METEC officials without a bidding process.

With regards to the charges of human rights abuses, in an unusual move earlier this year Abiy (note: in the Ethiopian naming convention this is how he is referred to) related that security officials had engaged in abuses and torture. These were done with impunity. Furthermore, the attorney general reported that some of the alleged abuses – including gang rapes, sodomy, waterboarding, deprivation of sunlight, and prolonged exposure to heat and cold - supposedly occurred at secret prisons in the country's capital Addis Ababa, as well as other locations.

Although Abiy has only been Prime Minister since early April of this year, he has steadily been burnishing his reformist credentials. It has been noted how he has reached out to Eritrea in an attempt to defuse the long running tensions between the two countries. He has also been working to privatize some of Ethiopia's large state-owned enterprises. With this latest move to reign in corrupt members of the security services, he continues to take Ethiopia in a new direction. **End OE Watch Commentary (Feldman)**

“Ethiopia has arrested 63 senior military and intelligence officers accused of corruption and human-rights abuses, the country's attorney general, Berhanu Tsegaye, said Monday.”



Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed of Ethiopia is breaking with the country's authoritarian past.

Source: Mark Neyman/Government Press Office (Israel)/Wikimedia, [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:Abiy_Ahmed_Ali#/media/File:The_state_visit_of_Reuven_Rivlin_to_Ethiopia,_May_2018_\(6810\)_\(cropped\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:Abiy_Ahmed_Ali#/media/File:The_state_visit_of_Reuven_Rivlin_to_Ethiopia,_May_2018_(6810)_(cropped).jpg), CC BY-SA 3.0.

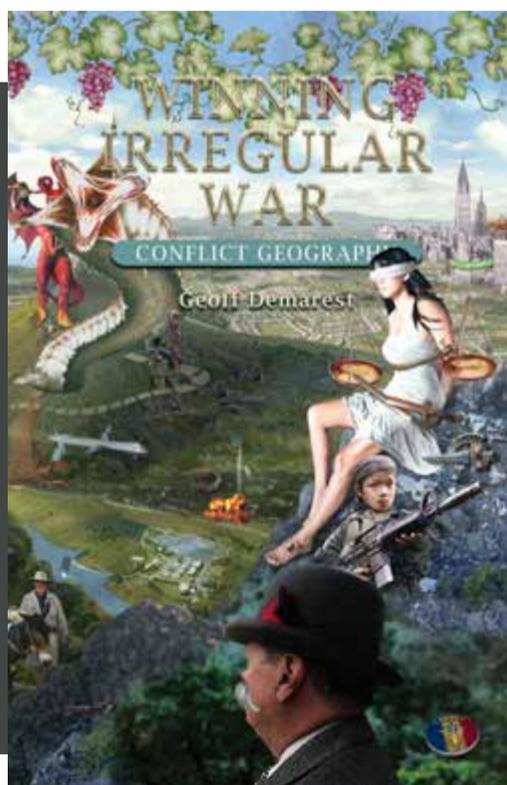
Source: “Ethiopia arrests senior military and intelligence officers,” *The East African/AFP*, 12 November 2018. <https://www.theeastafrikan.co.ke/news/africa/Ethiopia-arrests-senior-military-and-intelligence-officers/4552902-4848578-e1fah9z/index.html>

Ethiopia has arrested 63 senior military and intelligence officers accused of corruption and human-rights abuses, the country's attorney general, Berhanu Tsegaye, said Monday.

They represent a further flexing of power by reformist Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, who is seeking to break with Ethiopia's authoritarian past, analysts said.

On Monday, Berhanu outlined some of the allegations of abuse committed at secret prisons in the capital Addis Ababa and elsewhere.

“Detainees were subjected to various abuses including gang rapes, sodomy, prolonged exposure to extreme heat and cold, waterboarding and deprivation of sunlight,” he said.



Geoff Demarest's *Winning Irregular War* is about a broader set of conflicts than just 'insurgency.' In its 144 sections, Geoff Demarest uses a distinct, reconciled, more effective strategic grammar that draws on the disciplines of law and geography over political science. As Geoff Demarest puts it: “I hope that some of the ideas in it will be contagious.”

<https://community.apan.org/wg/tradoc-g2/fmso/m/fmso-books/195392/download>



Cubazuela Intelligence

OE Watch Commentary: There may have been a significant change, and perhaps purge at the Bolivarian Intelligence Service (Servicio Bolivariano de Inteligencia, SEBIN) in Caracas. At least a change at the top. As of the end of October, General Gustavo González López is out and Manuel Ricardo Christopher Figuera is in, according to the accompanying excerpted article from *Tal Cual*. It was not a scheduled rotation. General González' whereabouts have since been in doubt, with reportage that he is in custody and under interrogation. According to the accompanying reference from *RunRun España*, the precipitating incident was an 'unclear event' that happened around 27 October in which a SEBIN motorcycle patrol seems to have put President Maduro in some jeopardy. Fortunately for regime stability, Maduro's serene demeanor and the quick action of his [probably Cuban] bodyguard, the motorcyclists were "reduced, disarmed and arrested" and the situation stabilized. The reportage suggests that González is under suspicion for incomplete loyalty of some sort, always a challenge for an intelligence chief of a dictatorial regime. According to the accompanying reference from *Efecto Cocuyo*, General González' replacement, General Figuera, was a long-time Chávez aide and recently served in the billet from which González had been promoted. He will do fine, probably having good relations with Cuban intelligence, which, according to other recent reporting, is now effectively in control of Bolivarian intelligence. It probably and apparently already was, and it should not be lost on observers that SEBIN stands for Bolivarian Intelligence Service, not Venezuelan. **End OE Watch Commentary (Demarest)**

“...the incident led to the destitution of the director of SEBIN’.”

<p>Source: “¿Alguien ha visto a Gustavo González López? (Has anyone seen Gustavo González López?),” <i>Tal Cual</i>, 16 November 2018. http://talcualdigital.com/index.php/2018/11/16/alguien-ha-visto-a-gustavo-gonzalez-lopez/</p>	<p>Source: “Confirman que salida de jefe del Sebin obedeció a incidente con caravana presidencial (It is confirmed that the departure of the chief of SEBIN owes to an incident with the presidential caravan),” <i>RunRun</i> and <i>EFE</i>, 18 November 2018. http://runrun.es/noticias/361608/confirman-que-salida-de-jefe-del-sebin-obedecio-a-incidente-con-caravana-presidencial</p>	<p>Source: “¿Quién es el nuevo director del Sebin, Manuel Ricardo Christopher Figuera? (Who is the new director of SEBIN),” <i>Efecto Cocuyo</i>, 31 October 2018. http://efectococuyo.com/principales/quien-es-el-nuevo-director-del-sebin/</p>
<p><i>After Gustavo González López was fired from SEBIN, little has been known of his whereabouts. Only rumors in the social networks that announcements that the General Counterintelligence Directorate (DGCIM) are generating.</i></p>	<p><i>...‘it was about to have a serious ending that could have compromised the security of the head of state’... ‘The situation was contained by the professionalism with which the military accompaniment acted and the serenity with which the president handled himself; the motorcyclists were reduced, disarmed and arrested’... the ‘incident led to the destitution of the director of SEBIN’.</i></p>	<p><i>The portal added that Christopher Figuera served up to the present as general director of the Strategic Center for Security and Protection of the Homeland (CESSPA)... What is CESSPA? This organ is in charge of the unification of information about security, defense, intelligence and internal order. Before it was led by Christopher Figuera, the entity was under the command of General González López.</i></p>



El Helicoide de la Roca Tarpeya, a facility and prison belonging to the Bolivarian National Intelligence Service (SEBIN) (2008).
Source: Damián D. Fossi Salas [CC BY-SA 2.0 (https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/2.0)] via Wikimedia Commons, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Helicoide_roca_tarpeya_caracas.jpg



Venezuela Imports Chinese ZTE Social Control System

OE Watch Commentary: Chinese telecommunications company, ZTE, helped Venezuela create a social control system with a “smart” identity card. According to the accompanying excerpted article from Caracas-based *Descifrado*, the card was created in January 2017 and currently has over 18 million registered Venezuelans. El Carnet de la Patria, or the fatherland card, allows the national government to monitor Venezuelans’ social, political, and economic behavior. This was originally uncovered by Angus Berwick in Caracas and published in *Reuters*. The investigation revealed that a database stores personal information, such as social network presence, political membership, voting history, and even health records. According to *Descifrado*, in April 2008, then-Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez sent officials from the Ministry of Justice to visit their counterparts at the Chinese technology center in Shenzhen and to learn about the operation in China. A decade later, Venezuela imported the ZTE technology as part of an official \$70 million effort to strengthen “national security.” Venezuela hired ZTE in 2017 to develop the database with identity cards and create a mobile payment system to use with the card.

According to the accompanying excerpt from *El Siglo*, a daily newspaper in Maracay, Venezuela, CANTV is Venezuela’s state telecommunications company which depends on ZTE for the database. A team of ZTE employees has been in Venezuela working with CANTV since last year to establish the system. To convince citizens to use the card, a series of benefits are offered such as holiday bonuses or special prices for certain products. The accompanying statement by the office of Venezuela’s Vice President referenced President Maduro’s message to the people of Venezuela, that this a “social protection system” and that it promotes “the protection, social equality, solidarity, socialism, happiness and peace of the Venezuelan people.” While the system allows Venezuelans access to subsidized food, health, and other social programs on which the majority of people depend, they must provide the government with a significant amount of data in order to get what they need. **End OE Watch Commentary (Keshavarz and Bunker)**



Venezuelan Carnet de la Patria reverse. QR code, serial and code redacted to protect owner’s identity (2018). Source: Jamez42 [CC BY-SA 4.0 (https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0)], from Wikimedia Commons, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Carnet_de_la_Patria_Obverse.jpg and https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Carnet_de_la_Patria_Reverse.jpg.

“A team of ZTE employees now operates within a special unit of CANTV, Venezuela’s state telecommunications company that manages the database”

<p>Source: “ZTE ayuda a Venezuela a crear control social al estilo chino con el carnet de la patria (ZTE helps Venezuela create Chinese-style social control with fatherland identity card),” <i>Descifrado</i>, 14 November 2018. http://www.descifrado.com/2018/11/14/la-ayuda-que-recibe-el-gobierno-para-el-control-social-al-estilo-chino-con-el-carnet-de-la-patria/</p>	<p>Source: “Empresa china ZTE ha ayudado al gobierno venezolano a implantar su ‘carnet de la patria’ (Chinese company ZTE has helped the Venezuelan government implement its own ‘identity card’),” <i>El Siglo</i>, 15 November 2018. https://elsiglo.com.ve/2018/11/15/empresa-china-zte-ha-ayudado-al-gobierno-venezolano-a-implantar-su-carnet-de-la-patria/</p>	<p>Source: “Carnet de la Patria impulsa la Protección Social al pueblo venezolano (Identity card promotes social protection for the people of Venezuela),” <i>Gobierno Bolivariano de Venezuela</i>, 14 November 2018. http://www.vicepresidencia.gob.ve/index.php/2018/11/14/carnet-de-la-patria-impulsa-la-proteccion-social-al-pueblo-venezolano/</p>
<p><i>“At ZTE headquarters in 2008, the Venezuelan delegation learned how China was developing a system that would help Beijing follow social, political, and economic behavior through smart cards.”</i></p> <p><i>“A team of ZTE employees now operates within a special unit of CANTV, Venezuela’s state telecommunications company that manages the database.”</i></p>	<p><i>“Through this card, citizens can access grants and supplies, but they must also provide the government with a large amount of personal data.”</i></p>	<p><i>“It should be noted that to date, 18,396,476 Venezuelans are registered in the social protection system.”</i></p>



ELN and FARC Dissidents Actively Recruiting Venezuelan Nationals

OE Watch Commentary: While an estimated 40 percent of the FARC demobilized following the peace agreement with the Santos administration, a number of members of the group still feel frustrated with their current situation, as they have had to shift from cocaine production to other agricultural products and are not doing well financially. Despite the discontent, they have stayed on, hoping the Colombian government and key demobilized FARC leaders will help them succeed. On the other hand, many former FARC members never supported the peace agreement. Hence, they left the FARC and are now known as dissidents.

These dissidents have fought to find their way and most have shifted into other criminal groups within Colombia. It is also known that they are actively looking to broaden their ranks by recruiting FARC members in Venezuela. The National Liberation Army (ELN) is doing the same thing as they also want to increase their total manpower. In some cases, the ELN and FARC dissidents are working together or forming alliances with other criminal groups, as they want to take back the wealthiest FARC fronts still dedicated to illegal activity in Colombia, as indicated in the excerpted article from *El Pais*.

According to Juan Carlos Ortega, an analyst dedicated to studying the Colombian armed conflict, the ELN and dissident members of the FARC are trying to recruit Venezuelan nationals to support their criminal enterprises. These same groups seek to attract Venezuelans by force or by promising to solve some of the problems caused by the Venezuelan crisis. The Colombian military further reported that they have evidence regarding the recruitment of Venezuelan nationals in recent months. The excerpted article from *Periodista Digital* notes that many have been arrested while working with the ELN and FARC to commit extortion and to traffic drugs/weapons.

The excerpted article from *Meridiano 70* reports that the ELN and FARC are not only targeting adults in their recruitment efforts, but they are also looking to indoctrinate children directly through school systems within Venezuela or by bringing them back to Colombia. The ELN and FARC provide them with items they may not have such as food, magazines, word puzzles and coloring books. They also give children presents at Christmas. The article also notes that until political instability improves in Venezuela, it is likely that Colombian criminal groups such as the ELN and FARC will continue with their recruitment process in the country. **End OE Watch Commentary (Fiegel)**

“Given that the FARC now has its original base that did demobilize in addition to dissident members, the dissidents and the ELN are looking outside Colombia to recruit and strengthen their ranks in an attempt to gain back the wealthiest FARC fronts and gain territory.”

Source: “El paradero desconocido de lideres de las FARC despierta preocupacion en Colombia (The Unknown Location of FARC leaders Raises Concern in Colombia),” *El Pais*, 13 September 2018. https://elpais.com/internacional/2018/09/12/colombia/1536774123_549145.html

The wealthiest fronts of the FARC are those in the Southern Bloc, especially the 48th and 2nd fronts as their cocaine production remains high. These Blocs are led by high ranking FARC leaders who are not required to remain in areas of reconciliation as are lower ranking FARC members; many of which left the FARC after the Peace Agreements in Havana and who are now considered as FARC dissidents. Given that the FARC now has its original base that did demobilize in addition to dissident members, the dissidents and the ELN are looking outside Colombia to recruit and strengthen their ranks in an attempt to gain back the wealthiest FARC fronts and gain territory.

Source: “Los grupos terroristas colombianos ELN y FARC reclutan a venezolanos para engrosar sus filas (Colombian Terrorist groups to include the ELN and FARC and Recruiting Venezuelan Nationals to Fill their Ranks),” *Periodista Digital*, 15 October 2018. <https://www.periodistadigital.com/america/sociedad/2018/10/15/los-grupos-terroristas-colombianos-eln-y-farc-reclutan-a-venezolanos-para-engrosar-sus-filas.shtml>

Helder Giraldo, Commander of the Eighth Division of the Colombian National Army, stated that his military unit has concrete cases of Venezuelan nationals being recruited by the Domingo Lain Saenz Front of the ELN and by FARC Fronts 1 and 28. These groups are targeting Venezuelan nationals who live along the shared Colombia/Venezuela border.

Source: “El Eln y las disidencias de las Farc están reclutando venezolanos (The ELN and FARC Dissidents are Recruiting Venezuelan Nationals),” *Meridiano 70*, 15 October 2018. <https://meridiano70.co/el-eln-y-las-disidencias-de-las-farc-estan-reclutando-venezolanos/>

Not only are the ELN and FARC recruiting Venezuelan adults, they are also looking to indoctrinate children directly through school systems in Venezuela or by bringing them back to Colombia. Their objective with this type of recruitment? Both groups need to increase total manpower by expanding their ranks to try to increase their operational presence in areas where they do not have it. Furthermore, the political situation in Venezuela is providing them with the perfect opportunity to do so.



More News on the ELN

OE Watch Commentary: Increasingly, the National Liberation Army (Ejército de Liberación Nacional, ELN), long considered the bridesmaid of Colombian communist guerrilla groups, is appearing in regional news. Now it seems to be entrenched in Venezuelan soil and embedded into the Bolivarian territorial control structure run by the Communist Party of Cuba and the United Socialist Party of Venezuela. As noted in the first accompanying reference, from *Radio Santafé*, the group has accelerated its counter-economy hit-and-run attacks against Colombian oil infrastructure, with those attacks being close to the Venezuelan border. In the second reference, from *La Patilla*, María Ramírez, citing a major study done in 2017 by the Colombian NGO, Ideas for Peace Foundation, asserts what is being said by many sources -- that the ELN is being found in strength throughout Venezuela and is not being confronted by the regime of Nicolás Maduro. This is also noted in the excerpted article from *Venepress*. The fourth reference, also from *Radio Santafé*, is of a commentator who asks if it should no longer be considered a “Colombian” guerrilla. **End OE Watch Commentary (Demarest)**



“Aren’t these proofs sufficient to affirm that the ELN is in essence a Venezuelan guerrilla?”

Source: Ariel Cabrera, “El Eln sigue dinamitando el oleoducto Caño Limón-Coveñas y causa grave emergencia en Arauca (The ELN continues dynamiting the Caño Limón-Coveñas oil pipeline and causes a grave emergency in Arauca),” *Radio Santafé*, 13 November 2018. <http://www.radiosantafe.com/2018/11/13/eln-sigue-dinamitando-el-oleoducto-cano-limon-covenas-causa-grave-emergencia-en-arauca/>

The ELN guerrilla continued its terrorist offensive in order to pressure the national [Colombian] government to reactivate the peace dialogs...The oil pipeline was dynamited in Islas de Bojabá township in Saravena county... last week in the Cedeño township Toledo County in Norte de Santander...In the last four days the same number of attacks against the oil pipeline have been registered and in the course of 2018 there have been 82 attacks...

Source: María Ramírez Cabello, “ELN explora suelo venezolano desde hace cinco años y se expande para controlar minas y pasos fronterizos (ELN has been exploring Venezuelan ground for five years and is expanding to control mines and border crossings),” *La Patilla*, 7 November 2018. <https://www.lapatilla.com/2018/11/07/eln-explora-suelo-venezolano-desde-hace-cinco-anos-y-se-expande-para-controlar-minas-y-pasos-fronterizos/>

...They detail that on Venezuelan soil the ELN has been able to establish itself in a great part of the border zone controlling fluvial movement toward the interior of Venezuela, principally along the Autana, Cuaao, Sipapo and Guayapo rivers... Their interest is to establish themselves in border crossing points to control the passage of gasoline, food, and gasoil (motor launch fuel)...as well as all smuggling, rents from drug and arms trafficking, and control of mining along the banks of the Sipapo river’....”

Source: Fernando Tineo, “Venezuela: el ELN también está en estados con salida al mar (Venezuela: The ELN is also in states with Access to the sea),” *Venepress*, 8 November 2018. <https://venepress.com/politica/ELN-tambien-esta-en-estados-con-salida-al-mar1541703040682>

In recent months it has been able to confirm that in the Sierra de San Luis, between the states of Lara and Falcón, ‘there are members of the ELN,. For Tarazona [analyst], this is a strategic and geopolitical position in order to continue commercializing on what is obtained from illegal mining by way of the islands of Curazao, Aruba y Bonaire...With respect to the number of persons that currently belong to this organization, classified as terrorist, there would currently be operating inside Venezuelan territory, the Networks Foundation assures that according to their field research approximately 50,000 men in the ELN, in the FARC dissidence and other groups...He assured that ‘the guerrilla has five radio transmitters in Venezuelan territory and Conatel has dedicated itself to pursuing stations that question the leadership of Nicolás Maduro, but does nothing against the Venezuelan and Colombian guerrilla’. Likewise, he indicated that when there are elections, the guerrilla pressures citizens to vote in favor of the government.

Source: Mauricio Botero Caicedo, “¿Es el ELN una guerrilla venezolana? (Is the ELN a Venezuelan guerrilla Group?),” *Radio Santafé*, 15 November 2018. <http://www.radiosantafe.com/2018/11/15/es-el-eln-una-guerrilla-venezolana/>

...The NGO affirms that it identified ELN presence in 12 Venezuelan states, ‘about half the country...Aren’t these proofs sufficient to affirm that the ELN is in essence a Venezuelan guerrilla?’



Internal Divisions within the FARC and the Reaction of Remaining and Dissident FARC Members

OE Watch Commentary: Two years after the FARC signed an agreement with the Colombian government at the Colon Theatre in Bogotá, true cracks within the group are beginning to show and it is a split that can no longer be hidden behind claims that the disbandment of the group has been a true success. At the close of the peace talks, the FARC, the Colombian government and even outsiders knew that not all members would disarm. The top FARC leadership, who are believed to only have come forward with the peace agreement in order to avoid prison time, have been accused of misappropriating resources, adding to further distrust by lower-ranking members. These factors are just a few of the problems that are causing internal fractures within the group. Other factors discussed in the accompanying excerpted article from *El Tiempo* include the death of top FARC Commander Pedro Antonio Marin (aka Manuel Marulanda) in 2008 and his replacement, Guillermo Leon Saenz Vargas, who was seen more as an intellectual than a guerrilla commander.

Saenz Vargas was killed in 2011 and he was succeeded by Rodrigo Londono Echeverri (aka Timochenko), who actually sped up peace talks with President Manuel Santos. To those guerrilla fighters who were still active, they viewed the expedited process as a betrayal to the group, as indicated in the excerpted article from *El Pais*. It has been noted that the FARC leadership proved incapable of generating an atmosphere of unity surrounding the peace process and the post-agreement politics caused more disagreements and problems for the group.

While many of the former FARC members have demobilized, there is still a large contingent that never approved of the terms of the peace agreement. For this reason, FARC dissidents have simply shifted into other criminal groups within Colombia or have moved to countries looking to recruit FARC members, such as Mexico and Brazil. Those who have stayed on with the FARC are frustrated because they are barely making a living by moving from coca production to legitimate crops. Finally, as discussed in the last article from *El Pais*, those same dissidents still residing in Colombia may work together with other criminal groups to get back the wealthiest FARC fronts still dedicated to illegal activity in the country, despite the peace agreement. **End OE Watch Commentary (Fiegel)**

“These members claim that those higher up in the chain of command have mutually discredited themselves in addition to suspicious handling of resources.”

Source: “La fractura en el FARC, profunda y inocultable (Divisions within the FARC, Profound and Impossible to Hide),” *El Tiempo*, 2 September 2018. <https://www.eltiempo.com/politica/proceso-de-paz/la-fractura-en-la-farc-profunda-e-inocultable-263260>

Divisions between top FARC leadership has been escalating since the start of the Peace Talks in Havana as select key leaders wanted to remain a subversive group, while others wanted to completely give up cocaine production/trafficking. Other factors associated with internal FARC division are distrust of lower ranking members with their key leadership. These members claim that those higher up in the chain of command have mutually discredited themselves in addition to suspicious handling of resources. Other factors that have caused divisions from the past include fast paced changes in leadership due to the deaths of key leaders to include top FARC Commander Pedro Antonio Marin aka Manuel Marulanda in 2008 (he had been in charge of the group for 44 years at the time of his death). His replacement was named as Guillermo Leon Saenz Vargas who introduced a new type of leadership and influence within the FARC in which the “rural” style disappeared and was replaced with a more “intellectual” style.

Source: “Timochenko’ analizó las disputas internas en la Farc y evitó referirse a Iván Márquez (Timochenko Analyzes Internal Disputes within the FARC and Fails to Mention anything about Iván Márquez),” *El Pais*, 8 October 2018. <https://www.elpais.com.co/proceso-de-paz/timochenko-analisis-las-disputas-internas-en-la-farc-y-evito-referirse-a-ivan-marquez.html>

It was evident then that the FARC was already experiencing a crisis that was unprecedented in its history, without military alternatives to solve it. In the armed field, the insurgent group was withdrawing with few options for recovery. On the other hand, accusations started to arise within the FARC to point out those responsible for that military disaster, and blamed FARC negotiators in Havana indicating the following: “Those in Havana are the politicians, but not those who have fought in the mountains in Colombia. Now some bosses appear with a rifle only to have their picture taken.” Timochenko in particular received significant blowback from FARC followers as they felt he tried to move the Peace Process ahead too quickly without taking into account what the group as a whole wanted.

Source: “El paradero desconocido de lideres de las FARC despierta preocupacion en Colombia (The Unknown Location of FARC leaders Raises Concern in Colombia),” *El Pais*, 13 September 2018. https://elpais.com/internacional/2018/09/12/colombia/1536774123_549145.html

The wealthiest fronts of the FARC are those in the Southern Bloc, especially the 48th and 2nd fronts, because of their high levels of cocaine production. These Blocs are led by high level FARC leaders who are not required to remain in areas of reconciliation as are lower ranking FARC members who now feel marginalized. Furthermore, any surplus from the aforementioned Front’s are given to other high level FARC leaders. Discontent regarding what is happening with high level leadership has led to the idea that dissident FARC members may attempt to take power back from current FARC leaders, but at this point, that idea is simply speculation due to the cost of what it would take to do so and the violence that would invariably ensue.



The Flow of Cuban Doctors

OE Watch Commentary: Could we use “Cherchez les médecins” or “In quo vadis medicos?” as new geostrategic sayings? Maybe, if we are referring to the foreign strategy of the Cuban Communist Party. The regime in Havana is apparently pulling 11,000 medical personnel out of Brazil, while putting a couple thousand more in Venezuela. This represents quite a shift in their strategic deployment footprint. As the accompanying references note, the deployment of doctors by the Cuban regime is always more than a medical gesture. Along with the doctors go less gentle agents of the Revolution, and the Cuban regime expects to get paid, not audited. Having to redeploy out of Brazil has to be a major defeat. Reinforcing in Venezuela has to be part of an effort to avoid another. **End OE Watch Commentary (Demarest)**

“...they keep track of their compatriots in the More Doctors program, and at the same time monitor Brazilian authorities.”

Source: Verónica Goyzueta, “Cuba retira a más de 11.000 médicos de Brasil tras las exigencias de Bolsonaro (Following Bolsonaro’s demands, Cuba withdraws more than 11,000 doctors from Brazil),” *Diario ABC*, 15 November 2018. https://www.abc.es/internacional/abci-cuba-retira-mas-11000-medicos-brasil-tras-exigencias-bolsonaro-201811150315_noticia_amp.html

Announcements from President-elect Jair Bolsonaro precipitated an announcement that had been anticipated, given the clear ideological differences between the Brazilian and the Cuban regime. Wednesday, the government of Miguel Díaz-Canel announced the departure of its doctors in the social program that serves health clinics in the most remote parts of Brazil. In a Thursday Twitter message, Bolsonaro placed as conditions [for continuation of the Cuban ‘More Doctors’ program] that proofs of medical competence of the Cuban doctors be conducted and that their salaries be given to them directly.

Source: Editors, “Los espías cubanos tendrán que salir de Brasil tras la posesión de Bolsonaro (The Cuban spies will have to leave Brazil following the inauguration of Bolsonaro),” *Diario do Poder*, Brasilia, 8 November 2018. <https://diariodopoder.com.br/espies-cubanos-terao-de-abandonar-o-brasil-apos-a-posse/>

After the inauguration of President Jair Bolsonaro in January, the government will have to confront an emblematic problem: the immediate withdrawal, perhaps through expulsion, of hundreds of Cuban spies...the major part of the Cuban ‘intelligence agents’ came to Brazil in the midst of ten thousand Cubans in the ‘More Doctors’ program. ...they keep track of their compatriots in the More Doctors program, and at the same time monitor Brazilian authorities...

Source: Editors, “¡PARA ESTO SI HAY DÓLARES! Cuba envía 500 médicos más a Venezuela (For This Yes There Are Dollars! Cuba sends 500 more doctors to Venezuela),” *DolarToday* and *EFE*, 13 November 2018. <https://dolartoday.com/para-esto-si-hay-dolares-cuba-envia-500-medicos-mas-venezuela/>

Official media from the island today informed that Cuba has sent a new contingent of 500 specialists in General Integral Medicine to Venezuela in order to reinforce the collaboration that it maintains in that sector with the South American country...The two groups of Cuban doctors have already traveled to Caracas and the delivery will be complete in December when the total sum of collaborators from the Island doing service in Venezuela will reach 21,700 including doctors and professionals with other profiles...



Brazilian Health Minister, Alexandre Padilha, participates in the inaugural lecture of the module for the reception and evaluation of Cuban professionals for the second phase of the Mais Médicos Program (2013).

Source: Marcello Casal Jr. / Agência Brasil (CC BY 3.0 br (https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/br/deed.en)), via Wikimedia Commons; https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Mais_Medicos_Padilha.jpg.



Panama: A Bridge in Latin America for China's "Belt and Road"?

OE Watch Commentary: After establishing formal diplomatic relations with Panama in 2017, the People's Republic of China continues its efforts to strengthen these ties. As the accompanying excerpt from the centrist Panama daily *La Estrella* points out, Chinese authorities recently hosted a conference in Panama titled, "Think Tank and Media Forum," which provided an opportunity to "exchange views and proposals about the future of the China-Latin American economic cooperation." During the conference, attendees spoke about how this relationship is already bearing fruit, pointing out that China-Panama cooperation has "resulted in the signing of 23 agreements in political, tourist, economic, and infrastructure matters; among them, a light train that will connect Panama West with Chiriqui that requires an investment of about \$5 billion." As the excerpt points out, to facilitate greater cooperation between the two countries, "in April of this year, a direct flight between China and Panama was opened successfully."

Just as Panama served as a key juncture for trade in the Western hemisphere in the past century, so today, China regards Panama "as an important point of arrival in Latin America of the natural extension of the 21st century Maritime Silk Road." As the excerpt indicates, Panamanian officials "signed with China the Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation to Build together the Belt and Road." Chinese authorities have not only made inroads with Panama, but as the article explains, during "the last decade China established diplomatic relations with 24 countries of the 33 that make up the Latin American region." The article quotes a Chinese official who asserts that "relations with Latin America are an important part of Chinese diplomacy and guided by the important exchanges of the countries have reached a level never seen before."

End OE Watch Commentary (Wedman)

"In the last decade, China established diplomatic relations with 24 countries of the 33 that make up the Latin American region."



Goods From China Passing Through Panama Canal (2012).

Source: Katja Schulz from Washington, D. C., USA [CC BY 2.0 (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0/>)], via Wikimedia Commons, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Goods_From_China_Passing_Through_Panama_Canal_-_Flickr_-_treegrow.jpg.

Source: Larish Julio, "China Holds Forum in Panama to Strengthen Chinese-Latin American Relations," *La Estrella*, 15 October 2018. <http://laestrella.com.pa/panama/nacional/china-panama-tienden-puente-para-fortalecer-relaciones-chino-latinoamericanas/24087867>

With the recent establishment of diplomatic relations of Panama and the People's Republic of China, the Asian giant carried out in the Isthmian soil the first Think Tank and Media Forum. The conference organized by the Embassy of the People's Republic of China and the Association of Public Diplomacy of the Asian country had the purpose of reflecting and exchanging views and proposals about the future of the China-Latin American economic cooperation....

During the event, the Chinese diplomats, in general, highlighted the role of Panama as a bridge of Latin America in China's "Belt and Road."

"The forum ... serves as a bridge to strengthen the academic exchanges between China, Latin America, and the Caribbean, and the promotion of the mutual understanding and friendship among the peoples..."

Meanwhile, Liu Biwei, the vice president of the Public Diplomacy Association of the People's Republic of China said that the Think Tank and Media Forum is a space to reflect on the important issue of relations of equality, mutual benefit, and shared development between China and Latin America. Liu Biwei claimed that the relations with Latin America are an important part of Chinese diplomacy and guided by the important exchanges of the countries have reached a level never seen before.

In this context, he recalled that in June 2017, the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and Panama inaugurated a new era in the bilateral relations that with the leadership and momentum of the two Heads of State, the cooperation between the two countries in various fields have been developing "vigorously" and have gained a great leap, bringing tangible benefits to the two peoples. Likewise, in April of this year, the direct flight between China and Panama was opened successfully, the first to travel directly to the Panamanian isthmus from Asia.

Liu Biwei also stressed that Panama, as an important point of arrival in Latin America of the natural extension of the 21st century Maritime Silk Road signed with China the Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation to Build together the "Belt and Road."

"We must take advantage of this situation to strengthen the interaction of our development strategies and make the efforts to turn Panama into a 'bridgehead' of the construction of the 'Belt and Road' initiative between China and Latin America, to benefit the two countries and the two peoples," he specified. He also mentioned that in the last decade China established diplomatic relations with 24 countries of the 33 that make up the Latin American region. Panama, the Dominican Republic, and El Salvador are the most recent ones. With this, 'the countries recognize the principle of one China,' he stressed.

The diplomatic relations of Panama and China, which were established in June 2017, have resulted in the signing of 23 agreements in political, tourist, economic, and infrastructure matters; among them, a light train that will connect Panama West with Chiriqui that requires an investment of about \$5 billion....



Bolivian Government Steps Up Fight to Thwart Entry of Illegal Contraband

OE Watch Commentary: There are an estimated 116 routes along the Chilean-Bolivian border that are used by smugglers to move contraband from Chile into Bolivia, according to information from *Carreteras Peligrosas*. There are only six checkpoints along the Bolivian border and they are only monitored during certain times of the day, which allow contraband to pass easily from Chile to Bolivia. It has been reported that the starting point for illegal contraband is in Iquique, northern Chile, where smugglers operate in its duty-free zone.

In September 2018, the Bolivian government stated it would take action against illegal smuggling, but until now, no changes have been made and smuggling efforts continue to increase. This idea is suggested by the Bolivian Deputy Anti-Smuggling Minister Gonzalo Rodriguez, who states that the situation is very sensitive due to negative impact of smuggling on government coffers. The accompanying excerpted article from *La Razon* provides additional information as to how much money the Bolivian government has allegedly lost due to illegal smuggling activity. This same excerpt points out that at least 40 trucks with contraband enter Bolivia on a daily basis.

In early September, Rodriguez reported that by the end of the month, the Bolivian government would assign additional priority to establishing a strategy against smuggling from Chile, which includes setting up 24 military checkpoints along the Chilean border. To date, this has not happened, but there are reports that the Bolivian government is actively utilizing military and police measures to stop the entrance of trucks carrying contraband into the country. Some of these methods are outlined in the excerpted article from *Eju*.

The Bolivian government is also working to have at least 10 of the 24 anticipated checkpoints completed by the end of November 2018. As the excerpted article from *Pagina Siete* reports, the border military posts under construction are prefabricated and designed to house the troops in charge of monitoring and patrolling the border area. With the purpose of optimizing the fight against smuggling, the Bolivian government has decided to set up military posts with state-of-the-art technology every 5 km or 10 km. **End OE Watch Commentary (Fiegel)**

“Deputy Minister Rodriguez stated on 22 October that the losses caused by illegal smuggling from Chile to Bolivia has cost the government approximately \$1.5 billion over the six past months.”

Source: “Pasos fronterizos entre Chile y Bolivia (Border Crossings between Chile and Bolivia),” *Carreteras Peligrosas*, 21 September 2018. <https://carreteraspeligrosas.com/pasos-fronterizos-chile-y-bolivia/>

There are at least 116 illegal smuggling routes along the Chilean-Bolivian border that are used by smugglers to move contraband from Chile into Bolivia. This activity is relatively easy as there are only 6 checkpoints along the Bolivian border and they are only monitored during certain times of the day which allow contraband to pass easily from Chile to Bolivia. The starting point for illegal contraband is in Iquique, in northern Chile, where smugglers operate in its duty-free zone.

Source: “Contrabando desde Chile suma \$1.5MM en seis meses (Contraband entering Bolivia from Chile Costs the Country \$1.5 billion over a 6 month time period),” *La Razon*, 2 October 2018. http://www.la-razon.com/economia/Contrabando-Chile-suma-MM-meses_0_3012898687.html

Deputy Minister Rodriguez stated on 22 October that the losses caused by illegal smuggling from Chile to Bolivia has cost the government approximately \$1.5 billion over the six past months. He further added that smugglers operating in border areas recruit policemen to protect their illegal activities and that at least 40 trucks with contraband enter into Bolivia from Chile on a daily basis. The Bolivian government has also concluded that 70 percent of the smuggled goods enter the country from Chile.

Source: “Militares bolivianos destruyen con explosivos vías que utiliza el contrabando en la frontera con Chile (Bolivian Military Utilizes Explosives to Destroy Roads Utilized to Move Contraband from Chile),” *Eju*, 19 October 2018. <http://eju.tv/2018/10/militares-bolivianos-destruyen-con-explosivos-vias-que-utiliza-el-contrabando-en-la-frontera-con-chile/>

Defense Minister Javier Zavaleta reported in late October 2018 that the Bolivian government recently started using explosives to destroy roads most commonly used by Chilean smugglers. Currently, the Bolivian Joint Task Force is in charge of this activity, but no data has been reported as to where the detonations are taking place or how many roads have been destroyed.

Source: “Edificarán 10 puestos militares en frontera con Chile hasta fin de año (Bolivia Plans to Build 10 Military Posts along the Chilean border by November 2018),” *Pagina Siete*, 24 October 2018. <https://www.paginasiete.bo/seguridad/2018/10/18/edificaran-10-puestos-militares-en-frontera-con-chile-hasta-fin-de-ano-197276.html>

The Defense Ministry plans to have the first 10 anti-smuggling military posts ready by the end of November 2018. The Ministry also indicated to build the same number of military posts in 2019. All of the new posts will be equipped with state-of-the-art technology and will be emplaced along the border every 5 km or 10 km along the border Bolivian border. Additionally, the Bolivian government has approximately 200 military troops patrolling and monitoring the border with Chile, but the plan is to increase that number also. The government’s primary plan with the aforementioned actions is to force smugglers to enter the country through primary posts where customs offices are located.